3 vols

THE
HISTORY OF INDIA

FROM THE EARLIEST AGES.

BY

J. TALBOYS WHEELER,

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LATE ASSISTANT SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA IN THE
FOREIGN DEPARTMENT.
AUTHOR OF "THE GEOGRAPHY OF HERODOTUS," &c., &c.

VOL. III.

HINDÚ. BUDDHIST. BRAHMANICAL REVIVAL.

LONDON:
TRÜBNER & CO., 57 & 59, LUDGATE HILL.
MDCCCLXXIV.

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IN NOVEMBER NEXT.

By the same Author.

HISTORY OF INDIA UNDER THE MUSSULMANS AND MAHRATTAS,
INCLUDING THE RISE OF THE BRITISH POWER. 8vo.

This Volume will be complete in itself, and will also form Vol. IV. of the 'History of India from the Earliest Ages.'

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VARANASI.

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JOHN CHILDS AND SON, PRINTERS.

TO THE MEMORY OF

RICHARD SOUTHWELL BOURKE SIXTH EARL OF MAYO

MAJOR-GENERAL SIR HENRY M. DURAND

AND

PROFESSOR THEODOR GOLDSTÜCKER

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED.

PREFACE.

The present volume is complete in itself. It tells the history of India from a Hindú, Buddhist, and Brahmanical point of view. It starts from the remotest antiquity, and reaches right down to the appearance of the English in the Eastern seas. It does not deal with the Mussulman conquest or the Mussulman empire; as those subjects can scarcely be treated thoroughly, until the Hindú people have been well brought upon the stage; and although the history of Mussulman India has an intrinsic value and importance of its own, which entitle it to separate consideration, it throws little or no light upon the religious and social development of the Hindús. Whilst, however, the present work is complete in itself, it also forms the third volume of the history of India, the publication of which was begun as far back as 1867.[1] It may therefore be advisable to describe more precisely the plan which was originally adopted for preparing a complete history of India, and the progress which has since been made towards its completion.

The principal materials from which to construct a purely

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[1] History of India from the Earliest Ages, Vol. I., comprising the Vedic period and Mahá Bhárata. Trübner & Co., 1867. *Ibid.*, Vol. II., comprising the Rámáyana and Brahmanic Period, i. e. the Laws of Manu. Trübner & Co., 1869.

Hindú history are to be found in the four Vedas, the two epics of the Mahá Bhárata and Rámáyana, the laws of Manu, and the eighteen puránas. Of these the most important are the hymns of the Rig-Veda, the two epics, and the laws of Manu.[2] Accordingly an effort was made to form a basis for the history of Hindú India by preparing a critical analysis of this vast mass of semi-historical literature. The results were incorporated in the first two volumes of the so-called History of India. It has, however, been asserted by friendly critics, that these two volumes, however interesting in themselves, ought not to be called history; that properly speaking they are not history, but prolegomena to history. Possibly such criticisms are correct.[3] But still the Mahá Bhárata and Rámáyana are accepted by the people of India as history; and the two former volumes have enjoyed an extensive popularity amongst Hindú readers, as well as amongst those Europeans who are familiar with India. At the same time some knowledge of the Vedic hymns, and especially of the laws of Manu, is essentially needful to a right understanding of Vedic and Brahmanic India.

Accordingly the present work meets both views. It is at once the third volume of the history of India from the earliest ages, and the first volume of the history of India properly so called. Both begin from the earliest ages, and it is intended that they should be ultimately brought down to our own days. But the larger work comprises critical analyses of the sacred books, as the internal evidence on which the author bases his history of the ancient religion and civilization of the Hindús; whilst the volume now before the reader comprises the general conclusions drawn from this internal evidence, illustrated by the evidence of external authorities. In a word, the present volume opens with retrospects of the Vedic and Brahmanic ages by the light of the materials already brought under review in the two former volumes. It then brings every other available authority, excepting that of the Mussulman historians, to bear upon the general subject. The life and teachings of Gótama Buddha, the evidence of Greek and Roman writers, the edicts of Priyadarsi or Asoka, the Buddhist chronicles, the recorded travels of the Chinese pilgrims in the fifth and seventh centuries, the Hindú drama, the traditions of the Rajpoots down to the seventeenth century, the travels of Marco Polo and others between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries, and Faria y Sousa's history of Portuguese Asia during the sixteenth and greater part of the seventeenth centuries, have all been laid under contribution for every variety of information, and have been further illustrated by the experience derived during fifteen years' official residence in India and Burma. In this manner the attempt has been made to throw every light upon the history, the religion, and the civilization of the people of India before the coming of the English upon the scene.[4]

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[2] The Vedas and Puránas are chiefly of a theological character. Occasionally statements appear, more especially in the puránas, which appear to possess a historical value, but after a critical analysis they are generally found to fade away into myth and fable. Sometimes, however, the puránas prove useful in illustrating religious and sectarian ideas. The author has compiled several folios of extracts, as well as a voluminous index, but has derived very few positive data from them. The Buddhist chronicle, known as the Maháwansa, is entitled to more respect; but it will be seen, by a reference to Appendix II. in the present volume, that its statements are far from reliable, unless confirmed by other authorities.

[3] It appears, however, to the author, that the first two volumes of Mr Grote's History of Greece might be dismissed on a similar pretext.

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[4] Two works have been just published by Messrs Trübner & Co., which will form interesting illustrations of the chapters in the present volume which are devoted to Buddhism. Both are by Mr Mutu Coomára Swamy, Mudeliár, of Ceylon. The first is entitled,—"The Dethávansa, or the history of the Tooth-relic of Gótama Buddha, translated into English with notes." The second is entitled,—"Sutta Napita, or the Dialogues and Discourses of Gótama Buddha, translated into English with notes and introduction."

The next volume, which is already in preparation, will be devoted to the history of Mussulman, Mahratta, and British India. The importance of the Mussulman annals cannot be denied; but that importance is due more to the part which the Mussulman religion has played in the history of the world, than to any light which it throws upon India in particular. This importance is increasing day by day; for few impartial observers will deny the fact that to all appearance the people of India are drifting slowly but surely towards the religion of the prophet of Arabia, rather than towards that Christianity which is freely offered, but which they are not prepared to accept. It is hoped that the volume on Mussulman, Mahratta, and early Anglo-Indian history will be published in November next.

Witham, Essex, 25th May, 1874.

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HISTORY OF INDIA.

CHAPTER I.

RETROSPECT OF VEDIC INDIA.

Three eras in the history of India: the Hindú, the Mussulman, and the British.

THE history of India from the earliest period to the present day may be mapped out into the three eras of Hindú, Mussulman, and British. The Hindú era commences with the dawn of history. The Mussulman era commences with the invasions of the followers of the Prophet under Mahmúd of Cabul in the middle of the eleventh century after Christ. The British era commences with the conquests of Robert Clive about the middle of the eighteenth century. These eras are useful as furnishing chronological data for the great political revolutions which characterize the history of India. The struggle between the Mussulmans and Hindús commenced in the same century which saw the conquest of England by the Normans. The overthrow of Mussulman imperialism, and establishment of the British as a political and paramount power, were carried out during the single reign of George the Third. But Hinduism overlaps the Mussulman era, and both Hinduism and Islam overlap the British era; and the conflicting ideas, traditions, and aspirations of these two hostile camps of Brahma and Mohammed are still the main characteristics of the modern history of India, although they have been too often and too generally ignored.

Four elements in the Hindú era: the Vedic, the Brahmanic, the Buddhist, and the Brahmanical revival.

But the Hindú era, which is the first in the order of time, is also the first in importance; and that importance is increasing day by day. The Hindús of the present generation have been moulded into their existing form by their past history; and it is by their past history alone that the European can apprehend their modern culture. Moreover, amongst Hindús, and indeed amongst oriental nations generally, religion is their only nationality; and zeal for religion is their only conception of patriotism. The study of oriental religions thus assumes a vast political significance; and to be carried out effectually it necessitates a familiarity with the people themselves, as well as an acquaintance with their sacred writings. From a remote antiquity four conflicting elements have been at work in forming the national life of the Hindús; and at any moment either of these elements, or a fresh combination of these elements, may be suddenly imbued with a new-born enthusiam, and overflow the land like a flood of lava. Each has dominated during a particular age; and thus the history of the Hindú era may be divided into four periods, namely, the Vedic, the Brahmanic, the Buddhist, and the Brahmanic revival. But all four elements have been intermingling in the Hindú mind from a very ancient period, and all are more or less intermingling now.[1]

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[1] The term Hindú era is here employed in its general sense, as comprehending the whole of the ante-Mussulman period, and in a wider sense the whole range of Indian history. The term, however, may be more strictly applied to the history of the people before they were brought under the influence of Brahmanism or Buddhism; and in this latter sense it has been used on the title page.

Buddhism, B.C. 623—543, the first chronological stand-point in the history of India.

The advent of Buddhism is the first stand-point in the annals of India. It forms, in fact, the only true commencement of Indian history. Its founder, Gôtama Buddha, is said to have been born B.C. 623, and to have died B.C. 543 at the age of eighty. This chronology is open to future discussion, but it may be accepted as a platform from whence to review the past and commence the history of the future. The life of Gôtama Buddha is preceded by a dim vista of unrecorded ages, which is peopled more by creations of fancy than by mortal men. The heroes and heroines of epic tradition, the gods and goddesses of sacred legend, occupy all the foreground; whilst glimpses of the general masses of the population are but few and far between. But in the sixth century before the Christian era Buddhism dawns upon a world of reality and humanity. It represents the ancient people of India, not as mere phantasmagoria, distorted and exaggerated by the imaginations of bards and priests; but as living men and women, occupied with all the cares of existence, yet seeking to work out the main problems of the universe; to discover whether there is not a substantial religion, a form of holiness far beyond the conventional worship of the gods, or propitiation of unseen powers, which will secure the highest happiness in this life, and in the life to come. The history of the part which Buddhism has been called upon to play in the great work of religious development in India is thus replete with lessons for all time; but before attempting to indicate its specialities, it will be necessary to take a retrospective view of the progress of religious thought in this vast peninsula during the dim and remote period which preceded it, and which is generally known as Vedic and Brahmanic times.

Age preceding Buddhism: distinction between the Vedic and Brahmanic periods.

The first important feature of the Hindú era, is the broad distinction which originally existed between the Vedic and Brahmanic elements in the early history. It will be seen hereafter that the Vedic Aryans, who colonized the Punjab in a remote antiquity, were worshippers of the spirits or elements of the universe as gods and goddesses, and invoked those deities in old Sanskrit verses known as Vedic hymns. At some subsequent period the Bráhmans appeared upon the scene, and converted the old Vedic deities into representations or manifestations of the supreme spirit, whom they worshipped as Brahma. At the same time the Bráhmans effected other changes in Vedic ideas and usages, which will be found invested with a deep significance. The Vedic Aryans had neither temples, idols, nor rigid caste distinctions. They worshipped their deities as living existences; and they apparently offered up their own sacrifices and invocations, and performed their own domestic rites, without the aid of any caste of priests whatever. The Bráhmans, on the contrary, appear to have encouraged the construction of temples, and to have set up images or idols, which were worshipped individually and collectively as representatives of the one supreme being. The Bráhmans also seem to have distributed the people into castes; or at any rate to have recognized and sanctioned such caste distinctions; and they arrogated to themselves the position of an exclusive and hereditary priesthood, through whom alone the people were to present their sacrifices and offer their prayers. These distinctions between Vedic and Brahmanic religions must be all the more borne in mind, because the Bráhmans have not only modified the Vedic religion, but have also garbled and interpolated Vedic literature, for the purpose of bringing old Vedic traditions and usages into conformity with later Brahmanical ideas. This point will be sufficiently illustrated in future pages; for the present it will suffice to indicate the interval of thought which separates what is purely Vedic from what is purely Brahmanical.

Materials for the history of the pre-Buddhist period.

The materials for the history of India prior to the advent of Buddhism are to be found in the Vedic hymns and the Hindú epics. The Vedic hymns are valuable as the expression of the religious views of the primitive but intellectual Aryan people, who invaded and occupied north-western India in times primeval, and worshipped the deities or elements of the universe in an age when Brahmanism was unknown.[2] The hymns are singularly free from any Brahmanical element, although later commentators have laboured to interpret them in accordance with Brahmanical teaching. The two voluminous epics, known as the Mahá Bhárata and Rámáyana, fall under a totally different category. They are regarded by the whole Hindú population of India as the national treasuries of legend and tradition; and consequently may be accepted as the modern and popular conceptions of the Hindú people as regards their past history. But they cannot be reduced to

Vedic hymns.

Hindú epics: their Brahmanical character.

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[2] The term Vedic hymns is here specially confined to the hymns or mantras of the Rig-Veda, which is the earliest of the four Vedas, and the only one which can be rendered fairly available for history. Compare History, Vol. II., Part V. Brahmanic Period, chap. iv.

the form of chronicles. They refer to different stages in the progress of the people, but there are no links to unite them into a chain of consecutive history. In one sense alone they seem to have been formed into a harmonious whole. Every incident, whether it originated in Vedic, Brahmanic, or Buddhist times, has been reproduced in Brahmanic forms by compilers who apparently flourished in the age of Brahmanical revival. In other words, every legend and tradition has been systematically Brahmanized for the purpose of bringing all the religions, laws, and usages of the different races of India into conformity with Brahmanical ideas. When stripped of these Brahmanical grafts and overgrowth, the legends and traditions will be found to furnish large illustrations of old Hindú civilization. Again, when considered as a whole, they are valuable as indicating the process by which the varied populations of India have been brought under Brahmanical influence. But Sanskrit literature, whether Vedic or Brahmanic, has no historical annals in the modern sense of the word. It is devoid of all real sequence or chronology. It is grievously marred by the introduction of monstrous and supernatural fables, which are revolting to European ideas. At the best it furnishes little more than isolated pictures of the past, which have been preserved in the ballads of a semi-barbarous age, and converted by later Brahmanical compilers into vehicles for religious teaching.

Absence of chronology.

But although it is impossible to reduce the varied groups of Hindú traditions into historical form, it is possible to indicate the progress of religious thought from a very remote period. Relics

Elements of religious belief.

of pre-historic races have preserved their ancient religion intact in remote hills and jungles, as it existed in times primeval, and long before the priestly Bráhman appeared upon the scene. Again, amongst nations and races which have been brought under the pale of Brahmanical orthodoxy, organic remains of the old faiths are still discernible beneath the crust of Brahmanical teaching. It may thus be practicable to trace out the more important elements of religious belief which have been seething in the Hindú intellect from the dawn of history. At the same time it is possible also to indicate the more important migrations of different races into India, and their ultimate settlement in the regions which they now occupy; and thus to obtain, however hazy and obscure, an approximate idea of the political condition of the people during the unrecorded age which precedes historic times.

Geographical divisions of India: Hindustan, the Dekhan, and the Peninsula.

Some light may be thrown on the early history of India by a brief glance at its geography. The continent of India is an inverted triangle. Its northern boundary is formed by the mighty range of the Himalayas, which walls it off from the remote regions of Turkistan and Chinese Tartary. Its west and eastern sides are respectively washed by the Indian Ocean and Bay of Bengal. It may be divided into three belts or zones, namely—Hindustan in the north, the Dekhan in the centre, and the Peninsula in the south. These zones are formed by three lines, running from west to east, namely—the Himalayan wall to the north of Hindustan, the line of the Nerbudda river to the north of the Dekhan, and the line of the river Krishna which separates the Dekhan from the Peninsula. The lines of these two rivers must be prolonged in each case from sea to sea.

Aryan and Turanian gates.

India might thus be described as a triangle, having its northern frontier walled in by the Himalayas, and its western and eastern coasts shut in by the sea. But between the Himalayan wall and the sea there is at either end of Hindustan a considerable interval, which has formed a gate or highway into India from time immemorial. The Aryan gate is on the north-west of Hindustan, and is formed by the Punjab, including the valley of the Indus and its tributaries. From a remote antiquity successive waves of Vedic Aryans from Iran or Aryana have passed through this gate for the colonization of India. The Turanian gate is in the east of Hindustan, and is formed by the valley of the river Brahmaputra, which coils round the Himalayas like a huge serpent, and finally falls into the Bay of Bengal. From a period long prior to the Aryan invasions, various unclassed races of supposed Turanian origin from high Asia, have poured down this valley, and found their way through Bengal into Hindustan.[3]

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[3] The terms Aryan and Turanian gates are used only in a general sense, and with considerable reservation. Thus, although the Punjab has been described as the Aryan gate, by which the Vedic-Aryans entered Hindustan, it has also been the highway for Afghan, Turki, and Mogul invaders, who certainly cannot be referred to an Aryan origin. Again, although the Himalayan range has been described as the northern wall of Hindustan, there is reason to believe that it has often been surmounted by Thibetan races who have found their way over the elevated heights into Hindustan. But it is impossible for the historian to trace out the several migrations in ancient times; and it will suffice to indicate with tolerable clearness those which possess a real historical significance from having left a permanent impress upon the religious development of the people of India. For a valuable collection of original data, see Dr Muir's Sanskrit Texts.

Products of India.

From time immemorial India has been famous for the richness and variety of its products. Especially it has furnished abundant food for man, excepting at intervals of drought and famine. For those who live on animal food, there is a great variety of game, as well as sheep, goats, and poultry of every kind. For those who are contented with a more simple diet, there is a superfluity of rice and other grains, and of such condiments as pepper, mustard, and numerous spices. Fruit and vegetables are to be found in luxurious plenty, especially the nutritious plantain, the rich custard-apple, the red grape-like lechee, the delicate pine-apple, the musk and water melon, the juicy pomegranate, and above all the delicious mango, which is often larger than the largest pear, and as luscious as an English apricot. Almost every other requirement of humanity is also bountifully provided. The cotton shrub supplies ample clothing for so warm a climate. The bamboo and cocoa-nut tree furnish every material necessary for building a house, for binding it together with cordage, and for matting its sides. The forests contain some of the finest timber. The mines, which are now apparently exhausted, seem to have been overflowing in ancient times with precious stones and metals; whilst the seas that washed the southern coasts, especially those of the island of Ceylon, abounded in oysters which produced the finest pearls.

Different currents of immigration.

Attractions such as these would naturally draw swarms of adventurers from over-populated or less favoured climes; and it is easy to conceive that the earliest tides of immigration would have followed the course of the two monsoons. Thus in the remotest past nondescripts from the unknown south and west of a bygone world may have been driven in rude craft by the south-west monsoon from the southern and Indian oceans towards the western coasts of the Peninsula and Dekhan. Meantime, tides of Turanian invasion may have been driven by the chilly blasts of the north-east monsoon, through the eastern Himalayas down the valley of the Brahmaputra. Finally, in a later age the Aryans on the north-west seem to have entered the Punjab and prepared for the invasion of Hindustan. These collisions of rival races were doubtless followed by those intermittent wars for land and subsistence, which seem to have characterized the progress of the human race from the earliest age of stone and iron. Invaders from the sea would drive the inhabitants of the coast into the interior. Immigrants from upper Asia would drive the inhabitants of the fertile plains into the hills and jungles. The territories occupied by the several bands of invaders would be constantly exposed to the ravages and outrages of marauders on the border. Thus the entire Indian continent would be filled with strife and anarchy; and men would secure their harvests, not merely by the ploughshare and the reaping-hook, but by the sword, the spear, and the bow.

Kolarians, or aborigines.

The races who occupied India prior to the Vedic Aryans have been excluded from the division of the ancient history into Vedic and Brahmanic times. Indeed they have no history apart from Vedic and Brahmanic traditions. The remains of so-called aboriginal races may be treasured up as memorials of primitive man, but they furnish few data which are available for the purposes of history.

For ages their relics have been turning to dust in caves or cromlechs, or lying buried beneath the shapeless mounds which cover the sites of departed cities. A few dry bones, a few weapons of stone and rusted metal, a scattering of nameless implements and ornaments, are occasionally discovered amongst the debris of ancient settlements and forgotten battle-fields, which for ages have passed into oblivion. But such vestiges of the past can only interest the antiquarian, and throw no light upon religious or political culture. In the course of ages many of the primitive races may have been incorporated in the general population, and form in the present day the lower strata of the Hindú social system. Others, again, are still undergoing the gradual process of being Hinduized, although they are not as yet recognized as forming a part of the Hindú population. Living representatives of primitive races are still, however, lingering in secluded and difficult regions, but they have long ceased to play any important part in the annals of humanity. They represent the human race in its earliest childhood; and their pleasures and ideas are those of children modified more or less by the intercourse of the sexes. They may open up new fields of labour to the philanthropist and the missionary; they may be received into the Brahmanical pale, or be induced to accept Islam or Christianity; but their intellectual life has ebbed away, perchance never to be restored. In the later annals of India some of the tribes occasionally rise to the surface, and then drop back into their old obscurity; and it will accordingly suffice to describe them as they individually appear. For the convenience of refer-

CHAPTER I.

ence they are best generalized under the term of Kolarians.[4]

Dravidians: Telugu, Tamil, Kanarese, and Malayalam.

But there is one important race who can neither be referred to an Aryan or Kolarian origin; who must have occupied a prominent position in the old Indian world which has passed away, and may yet have a high destiny to fulfil in the India which is to be. This is the great Dravidian race of the southern Peninsula. The Dravidians apparently entered India long before the Aryans, but it is impossible to say by what route. Their cradle was probably in some distant region in upper Asia. There they seem to have overflowed their ancient limits, and moved in successive waves of immigration into Hindustan.[5] Their subsequent history is nearly a blank; but they may perhaps be traced through the Dekhan on their way to the Peninsula, where they became fused into separate nationalities, each having its own language and institutions, so that it is difficult to say how far they may be referred to the same parent stem. In ancient times they established empires which were once the centres of wealth and civilization, but which only appear on the page of history when their political power was drawing to a close. In the present day they cover an area corresponding to the limits of the Madras presidency. They are represented by the Telugu, the Tamil, the Kanarese, and the Malayalam speaking people of the Peninsula. Their political life has stagnated under Brahmanical oppression and Mussulman rule; but they are already quickening into new energy under the healthy stimulus of western culture. The Dravidian people are indeed endowed with a latent vitality which stands out in marked contrast to the lassitude of the Bengalee; and when they have thrown off the spiritual thraldom of the Bráhmans, and subordinated their caste system to the interests of the common weal, they will begin to play an important part in the regeneration of the Indian world.

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[4] A broad light has been recently thrown upon the pre-Aryan tribes by Colonel Dalton's valuable work, entitled "Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal." As far back as 1866 Dr Fayrer, of Indian celebrity, proposed a grand scheme for bringing together in one exhibition at Calcutta, typical examples of the races of the old world. It is much to be regretted that this scheme could not be realized, but so many difficulties were raised that the British Government declined to accept the responsibilities of the exhibition. The fullest information, however, respecting these tribes was collected from the local officers by the British Government, and entrusted to the editorship of Colonel Dalton, who has spent the greater portion of a long service in Assam and Chota Nagpore, the most interesting fields of ethnographical research in all Bengal. In 1872 Colonel Dalton produced his handsome volume, which is not only a treasury of authentic information, but is illustrated by a series of lithograph portraits of the principal tribes copied from excellent photographs taken on the spot.

Colonel Dalton comprises all the non-Aryan tribes under two heads, namely:—

1. The Kolarian, or those who speak a language allied with that of the Kols, Santals, Múndas, and their cognates.

2. The Dravidian, or those who speak a language allied with the Tamil or Telugu.

Colonel Dalton also treats of an important people, numbering several millions, who are certainly non-Aryan, but who have lost their language and traditions, and have so largely adopted Hindú customs and religion that they can only be called Hinduized aborigines.

[5] The question as to the origin of the Dravidian people is still open to discussion. Dr Caldwell, who has spent many years in the south of India, speaks of them as of Turanian affinities, who entered India probably earlier than the Aryans, but across the lower Indus. *Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian of South Indian Family of Languages*, by the Rev. R. Caldwell.

Dravidian religion.

The religion of the Dravidian race has long been crusted over by Brahmanism, but still the old faiths are sufficiently perceptible. The people worship guardian deities of the village and household; and every man has his own patron god. The serpent is everywhere respected, and more or less propitiated. The linga too is regarded as a symbol of the power of reproduction, and emblem of the supreme being; and it would thus appear that much

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of the Dravidian religion was originally based upon ideas associated with the sexes. Traces of the linga worship are still lingering throughout the greater part of India, but they are already dying away before the development of spiritual ideas; and but little now remains beyond an archaic symbolism, which has ceased to exercise any unhallowed influence upon the masses.[6]

Vedic Aryans: their origin.

The invasion of the Aryans is a still more important stand-point in the history of India. This intellectual people migrated from the cold region of Iran or Aryana, and were a cognate race with the ancient Persians. They were, in fact, an offshoot of the same Indo-European stem, which sent forth other branches under the names of Greeks, Italians, Germans, Slaves, and Celts, to conquer the western world. They originally settled in the Punjab, but subsequently crossed the river Saraswatí, which separates the Punjab from Hindustan, and began to colonize the upper valleys of the Ganges and Jumna. During this advance they encountered many non-

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[6] The religion of the Dravidian people, which lies under the crust of Brahmanism, is interesting from its extreme simplicity. "Snake worship," says Dr Balfour, "is general throughout Peninsular India, both of the sculptured form and of the living creature. The sculpture is invariably of the form of the Nág or cobra, and almost every hamlet has its serpent deity. Sometimes this is a single snake, the hood of the cobra being spread open. Occasionally the sculptured figures are nine in number, and this form is called the 'Nao nág,' and is intended to represent a parent and eight of its young; but the prevailing form is that of two snakes twining in the manner of the Esculapian rod." Speaking of the village gods, Colonel Meadows Taylor says: "The worship of Gráma Devatas, or village divinities, is universal all over the Dekhan, and indeed, I believe, throughout India. These divinities have no temples nor priests. Sacrifice and oblation are made to them at sowing time and harvest, for rain or fair weather, in time of cholera, malignant fever, or other disease or pestilence. The Nág is always one of the Gráma Devatas, the rest being known by local names. The Gráma Devatas are known as heaps of stones, generally in a grove or quiet spot near every village, and are smeared some with black and some with red colour." See Fergusson's Tree and Serpent Worship, Appendix D.

Vedic populations, and especially engaged in alternate wars and alliances with a powerful people known as Nágas, who were possibly of Dravidian origin. These Nágas were apparently so called, from their having worshipped the serpent or Nága. The progress of the Aryan conquest, and the characteristics of the Nágas, will be brought under review hereafter. For the present it will suffice to say that the Aryans gradually made themselves masters of the greater part of Hindustan; and then filtered towards the south, and carried Aryan civilization and culture amongst the Dravidian populations of the Peninsula.

Vedic Aryan religion.

The religion of the Aryans had a different origin to that of the Dravidian people. The Aryan religion may possibly have been a development of the ancient worship of the genii loci,—the spirits of the hills, forests, glens, and streams. To this day many of the hill tribes in eastern India, between Bengal and Arakan, still practise this simple worship in its most primitive form. They people the little world around them with unseen beings, the guardians of their village, tribe, and dwelling; and they propitiate these spirits or genii with offerings of fowls and pigs, served up with boiled rice and fermented liquors. Again, the Dravidians, as already seen, worship village and household deities. But the religion of the Vedic Aryans was of a far more intellectual character. It finds its highest expression in the hymns of the Rig-Veda, which are the composition of Aryan bards known as Rishis. In these ancient Sanskrit hymns the genii loci, or guardian deities, scarcely appear, and the gods that are worshipped are deified conceptions of the spirits who

Vedic deities.

pervaded fire, water, and sky; the sun, the rivers, and the early dawn. Moreover these deities comprised both matter and spirit; and both were often blended in the same conception. The elements were worshipped as well as the genii of the elements; and the sun, the rivers, and even the early dawn, were propitiated as substantive existences, as well as spiritual existences. Agni was the deity of fire, which illuminates the universe and lights up the domestic household. Varuna was the deity of water, and ruling spirit of the deep seas. Indra was the god of the sky, who pierced the rain cloud and brought down the waters, and was thus especially the god of harvests. Súrya was the sun god, and subsequently became involved in the conception of Agni. The rivers were all worshipped as individual deities; and the river Saraswatí, which was a kind of frontier between the Punjab and Hindustan, was especially hymned by the ancient Rishis. Ushas was the deity of the early dawn, and was perhaps the most poetical of all the Vedic conceptions, for she was arrayed as a white-robed maiden, who awakens a sleeping world, as a mother awakens her children. But the great deity of the Rishis was Agni, the deity of fire and light, who ultimately became the incarnation of justice and purity.[7]

The religious worship of the Rishis consisted of praise, propitiation, and prayer. They praised their

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[7] A large number of the Hymns of the Rig-Veda were translated by the late Professor H. H. Wilson, and published in 4 vols. 8vo. The translation, however, is based upon the Brahmanical interpretation of Sáyana Achárya, the commentator, who flourished as late as the fourteenth century of the Christian era. Another and more trustworthy translation of the original hymns is being carried out by Professor Max Müller.

Forms of worship amongst the Rishis.

gods as men laud their sovereign. They propitiated them with so-called sacrifices, which were simply portions of their daily meals, and consisted of rice, milk, butter, cakes, grain, and curds; and sometimes of a fermented liquor known as soma juice. In return for these simple offerings, they prayed for material blessings, such as health, strength, prosperity, brimming harvests, plenty of sons, and abundance of cattle and horses. When the meal was prepared, they strewed the eating-place with sacred grass, and invited the make-believe gods to take their seats and eat and drink their fill. They then poured a portion of their food upon the sacred fire, which was personified as a divine messenger who carried the sacrifice to the several deities; and when this was done the family apparently sat down and feasted on the remainder. The ideas connected with this religious ceremonial may perhaps be inferred from the following brief paraphrase, in which an attempt is made to indicate the spirit of the Vedic hymns:—

Spirit of the Vedic hymns.

"We praise thee, O Agni, for thy presence in our dwelling is as welcome as that of a wife or a mother: Consume our sacrifice and grant our prayers, or carry away our offerings to the other gods. We praise thee, O Varuna, for thou art mighty to save: Have mercy upon us on the deep seas. We praise thee, O Indra, for thou art our god and our protector: Drive hither with thy champing, foaming steeds, and eat and drink the good things we have provided; and then, O strong and valiant god, fix thy mind on the good things thou art to give to us: Give us riches! Give us long life! Give us vigorous sons! Give us plentiful harvests, and abundance of cattle and horses. We praise thee, O Súrya, for thou art the god who illuminates the universe. We praise thee, O Saraswatí, for thou art the best and purest of rivers; we pray thee to fertilize our lands and cherish us with blessings. O Ushas, daughter of heaven, dawn upon us with riches: O diffuser of light, dawn upon us with abundant food: O beautiful goddess, dawn upon us with wealth of cattle."[8]

Earlier and later conceptions.

The Vedic hymns, however, are not the product of a single age. Their composition extended over many centuries, and they therefore refer to many widely different stages in the progress of civilization. Thus some belong to a pastoral or agricultural period, when men lived a half-savage life in scattered settlements, and were threatened on all sides by barbarous enemies, cattle-lifters, and night-plunderers. Others, again, were produced in an age when men dwelt in luxury in fortified cities, when merchants traded to distant lands, when ladies were decked with silks and jewels, and when Rajas dwelt in palaces, drove in chariots, and indulged in polygamy. Again, the hymns represent different phases of religious development. Some are the mere childlike outpourings of natural piety; whilst others are the expression of intellectual and spiritual yearnings after a higher conception of deity, until all the gods are resolved into one spiritual Being, the divine Sun, the Supreme Soul who pervades and governs the universe.[9]

Multiplicity of Deities.

The Vedic pantheon was not confined to the deities named, but comprised a vast number of other spiritual existences. Indeed the Vedic people imagined deities to reside in every object, animate and inanimate. They saw deity in the lightning, the rain, the cloud, the mountain, the wind, the flowing stream, the weapon, the plough, and the sickle. This religious worship, child-like as it appears, served to develope the affections and was invested with a moral meaning. The deities were regarded with reverential affection, as well as with pious devotion; and the belief in the existence of guardian genii in all directions was a powerful check against the commission of acts which were likely to offend deity.[10]

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[8] Hymns of the Rig-Veda, translated by Professor H. H. Wilson, *passim.*

[9] This idea of a Supreme Soul does not appear to have been an original Vedic idea. It was more probably grafted on the Vedic hymns by the later Brahmanical commentators. The point will be further treated in dealing with the religion of the Bráhmans.

The Rishis and the Kshatriyas.

The military community of the Aryans were known as Kshatriyas. They do not appear prominently under this name in the Vedic hymns; but they are the heroes of the epic legends, which have been preserved in the Mahá Bhárata and Rámáyana. They were less spiritual and refined than the Rishis, and their culture was more military and political. They were a proud, high-spirited race, imbued with a deep sense of personal honour, and ever ready to resent an affront or to espouse the cause of a kinsman or ally. Their pursuits, their pleasures, their religion, and their institutions were marked by all the characteristics which distinguish a military aristocracy from an agricultural but intellectual population, like that to which the Rishis belonged. From their childhood upwards they were taught the art of war, which was more or less barbarous, according to their advance in civilization. Thus in primitive times they were trained to fight with their fists, to wrestle with their feet and arms, to throw stones, and to brandish clubs. At a later age they learned to shoot with bows and arrows, to throw the quoit or chakra, to wield swords and spears, to tame horses and elephants, and to drive in chariots. They frequently contended against each other, or were engaged in wars against the non-Vedic people, whose country they invaded and occupied. In this fashion they became warriors, hunters, and athletes, and besides practising the use of arms, they gambled with dice, or pursued romantic and often lawless amours. Their food was not the simple fare which the Rishis offered to their gods, but consisted of roasted horse and venison dried in the sun; and instead of fattening on milk and butter, they revelled in fermented liquors, and possibly in strong wine.

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[10] Compare Manu, chap. viii. *vv.* 85, 86. One of the characters in the Hindú drama of the "Toy Cart" declines to commit a crime which will be witnessed by all the genii around. See Wilson's Hindú Theatre, vol. i. It is difficult to say whether the hosts of spirit-deities, still worshipped by the Hindús, are of Aryan or Turanian origin. It is, however, certain that their worship existed for ages before the advent of the Bráhmans. Three classes of deities seem to have been recognized, namely, village gods, house gods, and personal or patron gods. They are known respectively as Gráma-devatas, Kula-devatas, and Ishta-devatas.

Different religious ideas.

The religion of the Kshatriyas furnishes significant illustrations of the effect of culture on theological beliefs. It was not so much inspired by the phenomena of external nature, which lead men to propitiate the spirits of fire, water, and the sky, as by the strong instincts of humanity, which lead men to adore heroes and heroines. The Kshatriyas worshipped the same gods as the Rishis, but endowed them with different attributes. The gods of the Rishis were poetical creations of the imagination; those of the Kshatriyas were incarnations of manly strength and feminine beauty. Thus the Rishis invoked the Sun as the divine illuminator of the universe; but the Kshatriyas worshipped him as their own ances-

Different conceptions of Indra.

tral hero. The distinction is even more marked in the different conceptions of Indra, who was the great god of the Kshatriyas. The Rishis invoked Indra as the deity of the firmament, who marshalled the winds as his armies and battled against the clouds for the release of the welcome rains. To this day Indra is the god of the harvest throughout southern India, and is especially the deity of the great Poongul festival, which takes place about the month of January. This festival is one of the last relics of the old Vedic religion which still remain in India. It is at once a harvest time and Christmas time amongst the people of the Peninsula; when families of joyous worshippers array themselves in new clothes, and propitiate the god Indra, and feast their respective households with new rice, boiled in new pots, mixed with milk, sugar, butter, and every other Hindú delicacy.[11] The Kshatriyas, on the other hand, worshipped Indra as a warrior of flesh and blood, the ruler of the universe, and sovereign of the gods. As a warrior he is represented as armed with the sword and chakra, the battle-axe and the thunderbolt, riding on an elephant with armed warriors around him. He was the protector of the fair-complexioned Vedic-Aryans against the black-skinned non-Vedic people. He was also a type of sovereignty, of a lord paramount of India; and a mythical conception has been preserved in the sacred writings of a succession of Indras reigning over all India at some ancient capital in the neighbourhood of Delhi. Even the name has survived in local tradition, and extensive heaps of mounds in the neighbourhood of the modern Delhi still bear the name of Indra-prastha, or the "dominion of Indra."[12] Again, as a deity, Indra appears as a sovereign ruler of the gods, reigning on high in an oriental heaven. He is seated on a throne, with his beautiful wife Indraní by his side. Around him are all the gods and goddesses of the Vedic pantheon; whilst beautiful nymphs, named Apsarasas, are ever dancing before him. This Kshatriya idea of Indra corresponds to the Homeric idea of Zeus, enthroned on high amongst the Olympian deities; and it is curious to note that the gods of the Kshatriyas, like the deities of Homer, are supposed to take a deep personal interest in the prosperity or adversity of mortals, and are moreover endowed with human passions and desires.

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[11] The Poongul festival has been admirably described by the late Mr Gover in the Journal of the Asiatic Society, Vol. V., new series. The most important feature in the ceremony is that of boiling the rice and milk, which bears a remarkable resemblance to old English traditions of the boiling of Christmas puddings. A new earthen vessel is filled with the new rice, mingled artistically with milk, sugar, butter, and other Hindú dainties; and the boiling is then watched with the deepest interest, for the surging up of the milk is regarded as a favourable omen for all future harvests, and is hailed with shouts of rejoicing. Few young scholars have exhibited a deeper appreciation of the Hindú character, and a finer sympathy with the nature worship of Vedic times, than Mr Gover; and his early death will be long lamented by all who are familiar with his writings.

Differences of worship.

A still more striking distinction between the Rishis and the Kshatriyas is to be observed in their form of worship. The Rishis offered a portion of their daily food of grain and butter to the spirits of the earth, air, and blue ether. The Kshatriyas, on the other hand, feasted their gods with flesh-meat and strong wine. At these Kshatriya feasts hecatombs of animals were slaughtered and cooked, and of course were consumed by the so-called worship-

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[12] Indra-prastha was the original settlement of the Pándavas, as related in the Mahá-Bhárata. The point will be fully illustrated hereafter.

Flesh feasts of the Kshatriyas.

pers in high festival. In ancient times these feasts were public banquets of a political character, but more or less mixed up with the worship of the gods, who were supposed to share in the feast, and take an interest in the occasion. In a later and Brahmanical age they were regarded as religious merits, and also as sacrifices for the atonement of sin. Amongst the most famous were the Rajasúya, or royal feast, which was celebrated after the acquisition of a kingdom or Raj; and the Aswamedha, or imperial horse feast, by which a great Raja was supposed to assert his sovereignty over inferior Rajas, who were obliged to attend on such an occasion to acknowledge his supremacy and do him homage.

Marriage customs of Rishis and Kshatriyas.

There was also a marked difference between the marriage ideas of the Rishis and those of the Kshatriyas. When a young Rishi desired to marry, he presented a pair or two of kine to the parents of the damsel, and then the nuptial rite was celebrated by her father.[13] But amongst the Kshatriyas the marriage ceremony often involved the idea of capture. A young Kshatriya might obtain a wife by carrying away the daughter of another Kshatriya; but before doing so the law required that he should have defeated her parents and kinsmen in open battle. Again, in primitive times a maiden was often offered as a prize in an archery match; in other words, she was obtained by the superior prowess of the winner over all other competitors. But in heroic times young men and maidens enjoyed a liberty which was unknown in a later and Brah-

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[1] See History, vol. ii., part v., Brahmanic Period, chap. viii.

manical age; and thus the marriage union involved an expression of preference on the part of the bride, and became known as the Swayamvara, or "self-choice" of the maiden. In the first instance the damsel, who was offered as a prize in archery, was permitted to exercise the power of prohibiting any objectionable candidate from entering the lists; and even after her hand was won, she was required to express her approbation by presenting the garland to the winner. In another, and apparently a later, age there was no competition in arms; and the damsel simply notified her choice in an assembly of Kshatriyas by throwing the garland round the neck of the favourite suitor. Ultimately, in the age of polygamy, when daughters were kept in greater seclusion, the damsel appears to have been guided in her choice by the advice of her father or old nurse, who were present with her at her Swayamvara. But still the idea was retained that the damsel had chosen her own husband; and thus it was sometimes the boast of a handsome and heroic Raja, that he had been the chosen one in many Swayamvaras.[14]

Swayamvara, or "self-choice" of the maiden.

This graceful institution has for centuries been driven out of India by later Brahmanical law, under which the girl has no voice in the matter, but is betrothed by her parents before reaching the age of maturity. The form, however, or some trace of it, still lingers amongst the modern Rajpoots. The royal maiden perhaps has no real preference, and is merely a puppet in the transaction; but a cocoa-

Traces amongst the Rajpoots.

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[14] See in the Markandeya Purána: there is a curious legend of a Raja named Avikshita, who had been chosen by many ladies to be their husband.

nut is sent in her name to a selected Raja, and this ceremony is deemed equivalent to an offer of her hand. If the cocoa-nut is accepted, the marriage rite is performed in due course; if it is refused, the affront can only be avenged by blood.[15]

Ideas of death and immortality.

The contrast between the ideas of the Rishis, and those of the Kshatriyas, as regards death and immortality, cannot be so clearly indicated. The later Rishis certainly believed in the existence of the soul after death, and in places of reward and punishment to which the soul would be adjudged according to its merits or demerits. They also formed a dim conception of a deity named Yama, who was clothed with the attributes of a judge of the dead and resided in the infernal regions. But these ideas were more or less speculative and visionary; the creations of the imagination and sentiment, rather than the convictions of undoubting faith. The Kshatriyas, on the other hand, exulted in a belief in a material heaven; a heaven of all the Vedic gods with Indra and Indraní as supreme rulers like Zeus and Hera; a heaven of celestial nymphs, ambrosial nectar, and choice viands. In like manner they believed in a hell or purgatory. But their ideas of the existence of the soul in the place of purgatory may be best gathered hereafter from a description of their funeral ceremonies. The body was burnt, and the place of burning was some gloomy locality on the bank of a river, which was supposed to be haunted by ghosts. Rice and meat, as well as butter and oil, were placed upon the pile. After the burning the mourners sprinkled water and presented cakes for the refreshment of the dead man; and on certain appointed days the ghost of the deceased was propitiated in like manner by similar offerings to his shade, in the same way that Electra poured out libations on the burning-place of Agamemnon. These feasts in honour of the dead were termed Sraddhas, and are still celebrated throughout India in honour of the Pitris or ancestors.[16]

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[15] See *infra*, chap. viii. A still more striking relic of this ancient institution is to be found in Burma. The people of Burma are Buddhists, and claim to be descendants of the Indian Kṣhatriyas. Every marriageable damsel in a village places a lamp in her window during certain hours in the evening, whenever she is inclined to receive company; and the hours which custom devotes to such gatherings are universally known throughout Burma as courting time. The damsel takes her seat on a mat, and holds a kind of levee; whilst the young men array themselves in their smartest attire, and pay their visits to one or more lamp-lit houses as they feel disposed. At such social gatherings mutual attachment generally springs up, and the marriage union is the legitimate result.

Absence of Sáti, or widow burning.

It is somewhat remarkable that in the ancient Vedic rite of cremation there is no authentic appearance of Sátí, or the sacrifice of the living wife or concubine in the burning-place of the dead man, in order that the female might accompany his spirit to the world of shades. It would therefore appear that the propitiation of ghosts led to no such horrible sacrifices amongst the Vedic Aryans any more than amongst the Greeks.[17] The mourners offered cakes and water in the simple belief that the spirits of departed heroes were conscious of such pious attentions; and to this day such a faith still lingers in the affections to soften and humanize the world.

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[16] It is a curious proof of the intermingling of the Aryans and Turanians, that traces of this religious worship are to be found amongst both the Rajpoots of Hindustan and the so-called Turanians of the remote South. In later and Brahmanical times the rite involves not merely an offering of cakes and water to the ghosts of deceased ancestors, but a great feast to the Bráhmans.

[17] It will be seen hereafter that the burning of the widow with the dead body of her husband was of Rajpoot origin.

History of ancient India: old Persian, traditions.

The history of ancient India under the Kshatriyas has fallen into a state of chaos. Persian traditions, which are still accepted by educated Mussulmans, refer to the old city and kingdom of Ayodhyá, or Oude, in the centre of Hindustan; and represent Krishna, the sovereign of Ayodhyá, as the first king of India, and the first of a long line of ancient Rajas. Other traditions refer to ancient Persian invasions of India, and thus seem to indicate that the stream of Aryan culture was flowing into Hindustan from time immemorial. Others, again, refer to wars between the Rajas of Ayodhyá and the Dravidian people of the Peninsula, from which it would appear that the civilization of the Dravidian populations of southern India was already in advance of that which prevailed in Hindustan.[18]

Two other sets of traditions have been preserved in the two Hindú epics, known as the Mahá Bhárata and Rámáyana. Those in the Mahá Bhárata are grouped round the city of Delhi, anciently called Indraprastha; and are connected with a very ancient

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[18] The Persian traditions of the old Hindú empire of Ayodhyá are too extravagant to be exhibited in detail, although they may be accepted as indications of the general character of the pre-historic period. The invasions of Roostum and Afrasiab may be regarded as representing ancient Persian and Turki invasions, although they can scarcely be treated as literal facts. Again, there is a legend that a chieftain of Kooch Behar subdued Bengal and Behar proper, and founded the ancient capital of Luknowti, or Gour; and this story may refer to some ancient revolution; though practically it is obsolete and devoid of significance. Compare Ferishta's Mussulman History, translated by Briggs, vol. i., Introductory chapter on the Hindús.

One tradition has been preserved by Ferishta, which may possibly relate to a real religious movement. He mentions a certain Hindú sovereign who reigned over the whole of Hindustan, and who was persuaded by a Bráhman to set up idols. Previously the Hindús are said to have worshipped the sun and the stars like the ancient Persians.

Ferishta also mentions that musicians, and the science of music, were originally introduced into Hindustan from the Dravidian kingdom of Telinga, the modern Telugu country.

War of Bhárata and exile of Ráma.

struggle known as the great war of Bhárata. Those in the Rámáyana are grouped round the city of Ayodhyá, which was the capital of a kingdom known as Kosala; and are connected with another isolated event, which is known as the exile of Ráma. The story of the great war of Bhárata refers to an early period of Vedic Aryan colonization, when the Kshatriyas had only recently crossed the river Saraswatí into Hindustan, and formed rural settlements at Hastinápur and Delhi on the upper streams of the Ganges and Jumna. The story of the exile of Ráma belongs to a much later period, when the Vedic Aryans had advanced down the valleys of the Ganges and Jumna to the centre of Hindustan, and established the great city of Ayodhyá as the metropolis of the empire of Kosala. There is thus a marked difference between the rude colonists of Hastinápur and Delhi, and the more polished inhabitants of the city and court of Ayodhyá; and this difference will be readily understood by reference to the traditions of the two royal houses.

Main tradition of the Mahá Bhárata.

The main tradition of the Mahá Bhárata has been amplified by the Brahmanical compilers into a huge unwieldy epic, which has already been subjected to a critical analysis in a separate volume. It will therefore only be necessary, in the present place, to bring such incidents and characters under review as will serve to illustrate the life and usages which find expression in the poem. These may be considered under five heads, namely:—

1st. The domestic life of the ancient Rajas at Hastinápur.

2nd. The family rivalry between two branches of the family, known as the Kauravas and Pándavas, which led to the migration of the latter.

3rd. The marriage of the Pándavas and colonization of Indraprastha.

4th. The quarrel between the rival branches at a gambling-match, which led to the ruin and exile of the Pándavas.

5th. The war of extermination, which culminated in the slaughter of the Kauravas, and final triumph of the Pándavas.

The old domestic life at Hastinápur may be easily realized if the probable surroundings are first taken into consideration. A large village seems to have been constructed of mud and bamboos on the bank of the upper stream of the Ganges. This was known as the city of Hastinápur. It was probably inhabited by the cultivators of the neighbouring lands, and all the dependants and retainers of the colony; whilst the Raja, with his family and immediate kinsmen, dwelt in a so-called palace or fort, which was most likely built in a rude square, with a council-hall and inner quadrangle after the fashion of Hindú forts. The Aryan colony at Hastinápur was not, however, without its neighbours. Amongst others was a Nága people, who dwelt in cities, and had perhaps attained a certain stage of civilization. Moreover, some tribes of mountaineers dwelt in the neighbourhood who were known as Bheels, who possessed no culture at all; they had a trusting faith in the power of the Vedic Aryans, but were nevertheless kept under strict subjection.

Aryan colonists amongst Nágas and Bheels.

Family incidents.

An old Raja, named Santanu, dwelt in this fort, and had a son living with him who had attained to manhood. Like many other old Rajas, he desired to marry a certain young damsel; but her parents refused to unite her to the old man, as he had a son already living to inherit the Raj; urging that if the damsel bore any sons to the Raja, they would ultimately become the mere servants or dependants of his successor. At this juncture the son came forward and sacrificed himself for the sake of his father. He took a solemn vow that he would never inherit the Raj, nor marry a wife, nor become a father. All chance of contention was thus removed. The damsel married the old Raja, with the assurance that if she bore a son he would inherit the Raj. Meantime the son was respected as a model of filial piety; but his self-sacrifice was regarded with so much horror by the Hindús, that henceforth he was known as Bhíshma, or "the dreadful," because of his dreadful vow.

Marriage by capture.

Raja Santanu became the father of a son by his young wife, and then died. Bhíshma, who was henceforth the faithful patriarch of the family, placed the infant son upon the throne, and trained him in the use of arms and all the accomplishments of the Kshatriyas. When the boy was old enough to be married, Bhíshma carried off the two daughters of a neighbouring Raja, according to the law of capture, and gave them as wives to his younger half-brother.[19] But scarcely was the young prince married, when he sickened and died, leaving no children, and no prospect that one would be born to him after his decease. Under such circumstances it was the custom amongst the ancient Kshatriyas, as it was

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[19] This law of capture, as already stated, required that a warrior should completely defeat and subdue the parents and kinsmen of a damsel before he attempted to carry her away.

Custom as regards childless widows.

amongst the ancient Hebrews, that the nearest kinsman should take the widows, and raise up sons and heirs to the deceased. The usage was a barbarous one. It originated in the intense desire to prevent a landed inheritance from going out of the family. Bhíshma could not interfere because of his vow; but another kinsman, named Vyása, ultimately became the father of a son by each of the widows. These two sons subsequently became the fathers of the men who fought in the great war of Bhárata. The eldest was a blind man, named Dhritaráshtra; and he became the father of the Kauravas. The younger was a white-complexioned man, named Pandu; and he became the father of the Pándavas.

Raja Pandu, the white-complexioned.

Raja Dhritaráshtra, the blind.

Kinsmen and dependants.

Whilst Dhritaráshtra and Pandu were still young men, Bhíshma trained them as carefully as he had trained his half-brother; but it became a question as to which of them ought to succeed to the Raj. So a council of all the kinsmen and retainers was held in the durbar hall, and the matter was discussed by all present; and it was decided that as Dhritaráshtra was blind he could not be accepted as Raja; and consequently the younger brother Pandu was placed upon the throne. But Pandu did not care to rule as Raja. Accordingly he left the Raj in charge of Dhritaráshtra, and went out into the jungle and spent his days in hunting; and after a while he died in the jungle, leaving a widow named Kuntí, and five sons, who were known as the Pándavas.

Meantime Dhritaráshtra governed the Raj in spite of his blindness. He had married a wife named Gandharí, and became the father of several sons known as the Kauravas. Accordingly when Raja Pandu died in the jungle, the five Pándavas returned to the old fort at Hastinápur with their mother Kuntí, and took up their abode with their uncle Dhritaráshtra, and their cousins the Kauravas. Bhíshma was now too old to undertake the training of a third generation. A skilled warrior, named Drona, was entertained for the purpose, and married to a kinswoman of the family. Drona thus became the preceptor of both the Kauravas and Pándavas, and trained them in the use of every kind of weapon, as well as in the art of taming lions and elephants, and in a knowledge of the stars. But a rivalry sprung up between the Kauravas and the Pándavas, which broke out on all occasions, and especially during the martial exercises; and it was soon evident that the Kauravas and Pándavas could not continue to dwell together much longer in the old ancestral home.

Rivalry between the Kauravas and Pándavas.

Individual character of heroes and heroines.

Before proceeding further with the story it may be as well to realize the several characters who have been brought upon the stage. The blind Raja Dhritaráshtra was a man without any force of character, whose chief object was to keep things pleasant, and prevent any open breach between his sons and nephews. His wife Gandharí is a pleasing type of a Hindú wife and mother. When she heard that she was to be married to a blind husband, she bound up her eyes with a handkerchief, so that she might not possess any advantage over him. Her sons were collectively named Kauravas, but their exact number is uncertain, and it will suffice to mention Duryodhana the eldest, and his brother Duhsásana. Duryodhana was a brave and skilful warrior, but bitterly jealous, and easily mortified. Duhsásana was a more taunting and spiteful character, and drove his enemies nearly frantic by his insolence and reviling. The Pandu family comprised the widow Kuntí, who is generally kept in the back-ground; and the five Pándavas, of whom only three require special mention, namely: Yudhishthira, the eldest, who was renowned for his patience and self-command; Bhíma, the second, who was a giant in strength, but stupid and barbarous; and Arjuna, the third brother, who was famous for his skill in archery, and regarded as a young and gallant hero.

The old members of the family were Bhíshma the patriarch, and Drona the preceptor. A young warrior, named Karna, the son of a charioteer, was maintained in the household as a sworn friend of Duryodhana and the Kauravas; and although his birth was doubtful, he was well skilled in the use of arms, and proved a loyal and faithful adherent of the Kauravas to the last. There was also a kinsman, named Sakuni, who was uncle to the Kauravas, being the brother of their mother Gandharí. He was, however, a notorious gambler, and skilled in the use of loaded dice; and in other ways was an evil genius of the family.

Migration of the Pándavas to old Delhi.

The breach between the sons of Dhritaráshtra and the sons of Pandu soon widened into an open quarrel. At one time when Bhíma was stupefied with liquor, he was thrown into the Ganges by Duryodhana, and was only saved from drowning by the interposition of some Nágas, which led to his residing for a while in the city of the Nágas. Again, at a mock combat during a public exhibition of arms, Bhíma and Duryodhana lost their tempers and engaged in a real fight, which might have resulted in bloodshed, but for the prompt interference of Drona. On the same occasion a fierce dispute broke out between Karna and Arjuna. Karna challenged Arjuna to a combat, but Arjuna declined because the challenger was only the son of a charioteer. Then Duryodhana is said to have made Karna a Raja; an ancient ceremony which amounted to Hindú knighthood. This led to more dissension, but the approach of night stopped the tumult. At a later date Duryodhana and Yudhishthira put forth rival claims to the post of Yuvaraja, or "Little Raja," which conferred the right of succession to the Raj. The blind Raja Dhritaráshtra tried to temporize, but at length appointed his own son Duryodhana to the post; and Yudhishthira and his brethren left Hastinápur with the view of establishing a new colony about sixty miles off on the bank of the Jumna, at a spot which was then covered with jungle, but which was subsequently occupied by the old city of Delhi or Indraprastha.

Swayamvara of Draupadi.

The colonization of Indraprastha by the Pándavas is a significant event in Vedic Aryan tradition. The Kauravas seem to have been already married, although the fact is not very explicitly related in the poem. The Pándavas determined on marriage before clearing the land for their new colony. They heard that a neighbouring Raja was about to celebrate a Swayamvara for the marriage of his daughter Draupadí. Accordingly they proceeded to the neighbourhood, and found a crowd of suitors dwelling under primitive huts, and supplied with daily provisions by the giver of the Swayamvara. The delicate question of marriage was to be settled by an archery match. On the appointed day the Pándavas made their appearance on the ground; but in order to keep themselves concealed, they disguised themselves as Bráhmans. The story of the simple ceremony which followed is valuable from its general accordance with old traditions. The brother of Draupadí placed the nuptial garland in her hand, and led her into the arena, and proclaimed to all present that she would be given in marriage to the fortunate archer who succeeded in striking a particular mark, which is said to have been an artificial fish twirling round on the top of a pole. Many aspiring youths assayed the feat, but failed. The ambitious Karna entered the lists, but was not allowed to shoot, as the damsel declared that she would not marry a man of such mean birth. Finally, Arjuna stepped forward, drew his bow and struck the fish; and Draupadí, pleased with his appearance, threw the garland round his neck, and permitted him to lead her away.

Inferior status of Bráhmans.

A strange tumult then arose amongst the suitors. Arjuna was disguised as a Bráhman; and it was not only surprising that a Bráhman should have hit the mark, but contrary to all precedent that a Bráhman should have dared to enter the lists, and compete for the hand of a daughter of a Raja. But in due course the whole matter was explained; and when the birth and lineage of the Pándavas were set forth, the marriage was admitted to be in every way suitable. One blot remains upon the story, over which it is necessary to draw a veil. According to a depraved usage, which prevailed in the early colonial life of the Vedic Aryans, the damsel became the wife, not of Arjuna alone, but of all the five brothers.

Rajasúya, or royal feast.

For a brief period the narrative runs on smoothly. The colonization of Indraprastha was effected by firing the jungle and driving out the Nága inhabitants. A romantic episode is introduced to the effect that Arjuna left his home for a year, and during that period married a Nága lady; but the incident is only valuable as illustrating the early relations between the Vedic Aryans and the surrounding Nágas. When the settlement had been established, the Pándavas celebrated a great flesh sacrifice, known as the Rajasúya, or royal sacrifice, by which they asserted their right to the land, or Raj. This feast was attended by many neighbouring Rajas, and amongst others by their cousins the Kauravas. The Rajasúya was regarded as a success and triumph; and it consequently re-awakened the old jealousy of the Kauravas. Accordingly Duryodhana plotted with his brethren to humiliate the pride of the Pándavas by depriving them of their wife and land.

Passion of Kshatriyas for gambling.

Here it may be remarked that gambling was not only a vice but a passion with the ancient Kshatriyas. Strangely enough, stories of men who have lost their lands, their wealth, and even their wives by gambling, are not only to be found in old Hindú traditions, but are common to this day amongst the Indo-Chinese populations of Burma and elsewhere in the eastern peninsula. Duryodhana, and his brother Duhsásana, consulted their gambling uncle Sakuni, as to how they might inveigle Yudhishthira into a game in which he

Gambling-match.

would be certain to lose. Ultimately it was agreed to challenge the Pándavas to a gambling-match at Hastinápur; and then Duryodhana was to lay down the stakes, whilst Sakuni played the game in his behalf. The plot was carried out. The Pándavas accepted the challenge, and appeared with their wife Draupadí at Hastinápur, where they were received with every demonstration of kindness and hospitality. A tent for the game was set up hard by; and there the memorable game was played between Yudhishthira and Sakuni; whilst Drona and Bhíshma, and indeed the Kauravas and the other Pándavas as well, took no part in the gambling, and were merely lookers-on.

The incidents of this gambling-match have been familiar to every educated Hindú throughout the Indian continent for unrecorded centuries. Sakuni is accused of having used loaded dice, and thus to have won every game unfairly. The infatuation of Yudhishthira forms an equally important feature in the ancient story. He lost all the cattle, possessions, and lands at Indraprastha belonging to himself and his brethren. Next he staked his brethren, one after the other, and lost them. Next he staked himself, and still he continued to lose. Finally, he was induced to stake Draupadí; and this important throw, like all the others, was won by Sakuni. Thus the Pándavas were stripped of all their property; and they, and their wife Draupadí, were reduced to the condition of slaves to the Kauravas, by the folly and madness of their elder brother, whose authority they had not ventured to set aside.

At this catastrophe a strange point of law was raised, which proves that such reckless gamblingmatches were by no means unfrequent in ancient times. A messenger was sent to bring Draupadí into the tent, and to inform her that Yudhishthira had gambled her away, and that she had thus become a slave-girl to the Kauravas. When, however, she heard what had transpired, she insisted upon knowing whether Yudhishthira had not made himself a slave before he had wagered her, and thus lost the power to gamble away the liberty of a free woman. No one, however, vouchsafed a reply.

Sensational scene.

A scene followed in the gambling-tent which must be left to the imagination. Duryodhana and Duhsásana insulted Draupadí by affecting to treat her as a slave-girl; and Bhíma and his younger brethren were maddened by the sight. Yudhishthira hung down his head with shame, but made no movement; and his brothers could not act without the consent of the elder. Meantime Bhíshma, the patriarch, and Drona, the preceptor, could only look on with silent horror. At last the dreadful intelligence was carried to the blind Raja Dhritaráshtra. He at once ordered himself to be led to the gambling-tent; and then commanded that Draupadí should be restored to her husbands. But the Pándavas were deprived of all their lands and possessions, and compelled to go out into the jungle for a period of twelve years, and to subsist as they best could on fruits and game.[20] The Pándavas obeyed the Raja without demur; but as they left the old palace Bhíma loudly swore that a day should come when he would break the thigh of Duryodhana and drink the blood of Duhsásana.

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[20] There was a thirteenth year of exile, but the incident is apparently modern. See History, vol. i., Mahá Bhárata.

War of the Mahá Bhárata.

The adventures of the Pándavas during their exile throw but little authentic light upon the prevailing state of life and manners. It will suffice to say that after the prescribed period, they opened up negotiations with the Kauravas for the recovery of their lands; and it is curious to note that these negotiations were never carried on in writing, but only by word of mouth through messengers, envoys, or heralds. At last war commenced in a savage but natural fashion. The allies on either side were marshalled upon the famous plain of Kurukshetra,[21] amidst the deafening noise of drums and shells. Then the rival warriors insulted and abused each other, until at last they fell to like madmen. The battles were little more than single combats, in which infuriated savages fought with fists and clubs, or kicked and wrestled with their legs and arms, or shot arrows, threw stones, or hacked and hewed with swords and axes, cutting off the head of every enemy that fell. Bhíshma was slain in a single combat with Arjuna. Drona was slain by the brother of Draupadí. Bhíma succeeded in defeating Duhsásana, and fulfilled his vow by decapitating him on the field of battle, and drinking his blood with savage shouts of exultation. At last there was a decisive combat between Arjuna and Karna, in which Karna was slain. The Kauravas now lost heart. The few survivors fled from the field, excepting Duryodhana, who endeavoured to

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[20] The plain of Kurukshetra is identified with that of Paniput. It lies to the north-west of Delhi, and has been the most famous battle-field in India from time immemorial. It was here that Baber fought the great battle in 1525, which virtually established the Mogul dynasty at Delhi; and it was here that Ahmed Shah, the Afghan, inflicted such a crushing blow upon the Mahrattas in 1761, as practically cleared the way for the establishment of Great Britain as the paramount power.

conceal himself in a marshy glen. But the Pándavas felt that so long as their chief enemy was alive, the war might be renewed. Accordingly Duryodhana was routed out of his concealment and compelled to engage in a final combat with Bhíma. At length, after a deadly struggle, Bhíma is said to have struck a foul blow, which broke the thigh of his adversary in fulfilment of his vow. Duryodhana was left mortally wounded upon the field, and died the next day.

Thus ended the great war of Bhárata. An incident is related of a night attack on the camp of the Pándavas; but the story is simply horrible, and merely illustrates the blind madness for revenge which characterized all the combatants. The Pándavas proceeded in triumph to their old home at Hastinápur, and took possession of the entire Raj. After this they conquered all the Rajas round about, and celebrated the horse sacrifice, known as the Aswamedha, by which they asserted their sovereignty. Meantime the blind Raja Dhritaráshtra and his wife Gandharí retired to a hermitage on the banks of the Ganges, where they ultimately perished miserably in a conflagration of the jungle.

Main tradition of the Rámáyana.

The main tradition of the Rámáyana appears under very different aspects to that of the Mahá Bhárata, and the surroundings are of a more luxurious character. Instead of a colonial settlement, like those at Hastinápur and Indraprastha, there was the great imperial city of Ayodhyá, the capital of a substantive empire, situated on the river Sarayú, the modern Gogra, with strong walls, gates, and a garrison of archers. Instead of a rude fort there was a magnificent palace, an extensive zenana, and all the paraphernalia of sovereignty. The Maháraja, or great Raja, was not a mere feudal chieftain surrounded by retainers, but the monarch of an empire, with ministers of state and a council of nobles. Finally, the exile of Ráma was not brought about by a quarrel between rival kinsmen, but by zenana intrigues between two jealous and unscrupulous queens. The subject matter of the epic has been already treated in a separate volume, much in the same manner as that of the Mahá Bhárata. It will therefore only be necessary to bring together such incidents as will indicate the state of civilization; and these may be considered under four heads, namely:—

1st. The domestic life of the royal family at Ayodhyá.

2nd. The intrigues of the first queen, and the favourite queen, respecting the appointment of the heir-apparent.

3rd. The exile of Ráma.

4th. The death of the Maháraja and triumphant return of Ráma.[22]

Royal family at Ayodhyá, or Oude.

Maháraja Dasaratha was sovereign of the empire of Kosala, in the centre of Hindustan; and a descendant of the Suryavansa, or children of the Sun. The city of Ayodhyá was the metropolis; and here he dwelt in his palace in all the pride and pomp of royalty. He had three queens, by whom he had four sons. The first and oldest queen was named Kausalyá, and she was the mother of Ráma. The youngest and favourite queen was named Kaikeyí, and she was the mother of Bharata. There was also a third queen, who had two sons, but they played such unimportant parts in the story, that their names may be passed over in silence.

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[22] See History, vol. ii., part iv., Rámáyana.—The Rámáyana also narrates an important event, known as the war between Ráma and the Rákshasas, on account of the abduction of the wife of Ráma, by Rávana, the demon Raja of Lanká or Ceylon. This event, however, seems to have no real connection with the tradition of the exile. It appears to be connected with the life of another Ráma, who was distinguished as the Ráma of the Dekhan. It will be brought under review in chapter vii., which deals with the history of the Brahmanical revival.

Marriage of Ráma and Sítá.

Ráma, the eldest son of the Maháraja, was married to a princess named Sítá. She was the daughter of Janaka, the Raja of the neighbouring kingdom of Mithilá, which seems to have generally corresponded to the modern country of Tirhoot. The story of the marriage is a curious relic of old Hindú life. Ráma paid a visit to Mithilá at an early age, and found that Sítá was to be given in marriage to the hero who first succeeded in bending a certain enormous bow. Many young men had tried to accomplish this feat, but all had failed. Ráma, however, bent the bow with ease, and thus obtained his beautiful bride. The marriage rites were performed by Raja Janaka. The sacred fire was burning on the altar, and Ráma was conducted to it by a procession of friends and kinsmen, and stood at the north-east corner of the altar. Janaka then brought his daughter and placed her by the side of the bridegroom; and Ráma took her by the hand in the presence of the fire-deity, and accepted her as his wife. The pair were sprinkled with water which had been consecrated by the utterance of Vedic hymns; and then walked three times round the altar, whilst the trumpets were sounded to announce that the marriage was over.[23]

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[23] It is impossible to avoid noticing the striking resemblance between the ancient marriage ceremony, as it was performed by our Aryan forefathers in their

Appointment of "Little Raja," or heir-apparent.

Shortly after the marriage of Ráma a question of considerable importance was agitated at the court of Ayodhyá, namely, the appointment of an heir-apparent to the throne under the title of Yuvaraja, or "Little Raja." According to Hindú usages, the heir-apparent was installed as Yuvaraja whilst the Maháraja was still living; in order that he might relieve the sovereign of the heavier duties of the administration, and prepare himself for the important position which he would have to fulfil when he succeeded to the throne. But Maháraja Dasaratha, like many other sovereigns, was disinclined to resign any share of his power and dignity to a son and successor; and possibly he feared that the appointment would lead to a bitter and jealous dispute in his own household. He was, however, compelled to yield to the popular will. A deputation of ministers and chieftains waited upon him to express the general desire that he should retire from the more active duties of the administration, and entrust the power to his eldest son Ráma. Accordingly the Maháraja summoned a great council of chieftains and people, and publicly announced his intention of appointing Ráma to the post of Yuvaraja; and it was decided that on the following day the prince should be solemnly inaugurated upon the throne with all the ancient ceremonial.

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private dwellings, and the more modern rite as it is performed in Christian churches. In Protestant countries the fire on the altar has been rejected as Jewish; it belongs rather to the old Aryan fire-worship. Again, the use of holy water has been abandoned, although it is nothing more than an old rite of purification. But in all essential particulars the ceremony is the same. The bridegroom and the bride are still placed before the altar; and the father of the bride gives away his daughter; whilst the bridegroom takes her hand in his, and pledges his troth in the presence of the altar, although the fire is wanting.—History, vol. ii., Rámáyana, ch. v.

Intrigues of the first queen.

Whilst these proceedings were transpiring before the public eye, intrigues were already in progress within the palace walls. Kausalyá, the first queen, was naturally deeply interested in the movement which would secure the succession to her son Ráma; and there seems no question that Ráma, as the eldest son, had the strongest claim to the post of Yuvaraja. But Kaikeyí, the youngest queen, had long maintained an extraordinary influence on the aged Maháraja by reason of her youth and beauty; and it was feared that she would cajole the old sovereign into nominating her own son Bharata. Accordingly the whole business had been kept a profound secret from Kaikeyí. She had even been induced to allow her son Bharata to pay a visit to her own father, without suspecting that the only object was to get him out of the city until Ráma had been installed, and consequently only exulting with all a mother's pride in the expected meeting between her son and her father.

The great council was over, and preparations were on foot for the inauguration. Kaikeyí was unconsciously sitting in her own apartment, expecting a visit from the Maháraja. Meantime her old nurse happened to ascend the roof of the palace, and there beheld the blaze of illuminations and general rejoicings; and at the same time was told that on the following morning Ráma was to be enthroned as Yuvaraja. The woman had been too long familiar with zenana intrigues not to perceive at once that her mistress had been outwitted by the first queen; that Kausalyá had procured the absence of Bharata in order to secure the installation of her own son Ráma. She accordingly carried the terrible

Violence of the favourite queen.

news to Kaikeyí, and threw the favourite beauty into a vindictive fury, which is only conceivable in such a hot-bed of jealousy as an oriental zenana. Kaikeyí threw off all her jewels and ornaments, and scattered them over the floor. She then untied her long black hair, and dishevelled it over her shoulders, and cast herself upon the ground, and poured out a flood of tears.

The Maháraja succumbs to the favourite.

Meantime the old Maháraja, knowing that he had difficult news to communicate to his young and favourite wife, proceeded to her apartments in the vain hope of reconciling her to the appointment of Ráma. But when he saw her weeping and fainting upon the floor, he felt that he was powerless. She was deaf to all entreaties and explanations; and when he began to moan and wail she was heedless of all his affliction. Only one thing would content her, namely, that Ráma should be banished to the jungle, and that her own son Bharata should be appointed Yuvaraja. She cared not for the long-established custom of the family, nor for the remonstrances of the great council, nor for the disappointment of the people in general. Ráma was to be exiled, and Bharata was to be installed. The result may be anticipated. The Maháraja was threatened and caressed by turns, until at last he yielded to the strong will and blandishments of the imperious beauty, and engaged that Ráma should be banished from the realm, and that Bharata should be enthroned in his room.

Ráma's exile.

Next morning there was a scene. The city had been kept awake throughout the night by the joyful preparations for the installation of Ráma, whilst the country people had been pouring in from all the villages round about to witness the imposing ceremony. Meantime the Maháraja had repented his promise of the previous night, and would gladly have escaped from its fulfilment; but Kaikeyí held him to her purpose, like a tigress caring only for her young. Ráma was summoned to the palace, but instead of hearing that he was appointed Yuvaraja, he was coldly told by Kaikeyí that he was to go into exile for fourteen years, and that Bharata was to fill the post. Ráma, however, bore the sudden and astounding news with all the self-repression of a trained Asiatic. He betrayed neither grief nor disappointment, but only professed his desire to obey the will of his father. He then carried the dreadful tidings to his mother Kausalyá, who was almost broken-hearted by the shock. She had expected that her son would have ultimately become the Maháraja, whilst she herself exercised supreme dominion over the whole zenana. But the one hope of her life was shattered to the dust. Her beloved son was to be separated from her probably for ever; and she had nothing before her but a joyless widowhood, exposed to the taunts and triumphs of her younger rival. In her first exasperation she declared that the Maháraja had lost his senses; and she implored Ráma to take the initiative and place him in confinement, and assume the royal power. But Ráma refused to commit such an act of disobedience and disloyalty. He returned to his own house, and informed his wife Sítá of all that had occurred; and the young wife, as was only natural, received the intelligence in a widely different spirit from Kausalyá. She cared for no hardships and no privations, provided only that she might accompany her husband into the jungle; and Ráma was at last induced to permit her to share his banishment. Lakshmana, a brother of Ráma, was also allowed to accompany the exiles.

Route of the exiles.

The narrative of the banishment would seem to imply that such catastrophes were by no means unfrequent in ancient time. The royal charioteer was ordered to drive the exiles to the frontier; and there they were well entertained by a Raja of the Bheels, named Guha, who seems to have been in friendly alliance with Kosala. The charioteer then returned to Ayodhyá, whilst the exiles crossed the river Ganges to the southern bank. During the passage Sítá offered up a prayer to the river goddess for the safe return of her husband at the termination of his banishment; and she made a vow that if her prayers were answered, she would present the goddess with large offerings of flesh-meat and spirituous liquors. The exiles next proceeded to the hermitages of the Bráhmans at Prayága; the holy spot where the Ganges and Jumna form a junction. From Prayága they crossed the Jumna, and Sítá repeated to the goddess of that river the prayers and vows which she had already offered to the Ganges. Finally, they took up their abode on the hill Chitra-kúta in Bundelkund, where they dwelt for many days in a hut constructed of trees and leaves.

Before Ráma reached Chitra-kúta, his aged father Dasaratha had expired from grief in his palace at Ayodhyá. The event is related with many striking incidents illustrative of ancient Hindú civilization. It transpired in the apartments of the first queen Kausalyá. At midnight the old Maháraja

Death of the Maháraja.

found that his soul was departing to the abode of Yama; and he yielded up the ghost with a longing cry for his exiled son. The queen was so affected by the shock that she fell into a deep swoon, which continued throughout the night. Early morning dawned, and the ordinary life of the palace commenced as usual. The servants, male and female, were bringing in water and perfumes, as well as the early morning refreshment which is so general throughout India. Bards and eulogists, according to custom, were singing the praises of the Maháraja. The appearance of the sovereign was expected every moment, for no one was conscious of the calamity that had occurred. At last the ladies of the zenana proceeded to awaken the Maháraja; and then they found that he was dead in the chamber of Kausalyá. At once the palace resounded with their shrieks and screams. The fatal news spread throughout the royal household that the sovereign was no more. The utmost confusion and excitement broke up the calm of early morning. The ministers of state hurried to the chamber, and confirmed the fatal tidings. Maháraja Dasaratha had breathed his last.

The circumstances which followed furnish a glimpse of the political life in the old empire of Kosala. Neither of the sons of the deceased Maháraja was present at Ayodhyá. Bharata had gone to the city of his grandfather, accompanied by one of his brothers; and Ráma had gone into exile with the remaining brother. Consequently it was necessary to defer the funeral ceremony until it could be conducted by the son who was to succeed to the throne. For this purpose the remains of the deceased Maháraja were placed for preservation in a

The great council.

large cauldron of oil. The council was assembled on the following day, and the nomination of the deceased Maháraja was accepted. The exile of Ráma was considered to disqualify him for succeeding to the throne; and messengers were sent to bring Bharata to Ayodhyá with all speed.

Funeral rites for the Maharaja.

Bharata hastened to the capital, but on his arrival he is said to have refused to ascend the throne to the exclusion of his elder brother. Before this point could be settled, it was necessary that he should superintend the burning of the royal remains, and perform the thirteen days of mourning. The body of the deceased Maháraja was placed upon a litter, and covered with garlands, and sprinkled with incense. The funeral procession then moved slowly along to the place of burning without the city. First walked the bards and eulogists, chanting the praises of the deceased Maháraja in melancholy strains. Next appeared the royal widows on foot, with their long black hair dishevelled over their shoulders, shrieking and screaming as they moved along. Next came the royal litter borne by the servants of the Maháraja, with the sacred fire ever burning; whilst the insignia of royalty were held over the royal corpse,—the white umbrella of sovereignty, and the jewelled chamaras of hair waving to and fro. Bharata and his brother walked close behind, weeping very bitterly, and holding on to the litter with their hands. Other servants followed in chariots, and distributed funeral gifts amongst the surrounding multitude. The place of burning was a desolate spot on the bank of the river Sarayú. There the funeral pile was prepared, and the royal corpse was reverently placed thereon;

and animals were sacrificed, and their flesh placed upon the pile, together with boiled rice, oil, and ghee. Bharata fired the pile, which was consumed amidst the cries of the women, and the lamentations of the vast multitude. Bharata and his brother then poured out libations of water to refresh the soul of their departed father; and the mourners returned to the gloomy city. For ten days Bharata lamented for his father on a mat of kusa grass. On the tenth day he purified himself. On the twelfth day he performed the Sráddha, or offering of cakes and other food to the soul of his father. On the thirteenth day he returned to the place of burning, accompanied by his brother, and threw all the remains of the deceased sovereign into the river; and thus the funeral rites of Maháraja Dasaratha were brought to a close.

Closing scenes and return of Ráma.

According to the Rámáyana, Bharata subsequently undertook a journey into the jungle, in order to offer the Raj to his elder brother Ráma; and the interview between the two brothers on the hill of Chitra-kúta is described at considerable length. But the incidents, although interesting in themselves, are somewhat apocryphal, and throw no light upon ancient manners and usages.[24] Ráma is said to have refused the Raj; and Bharata returned to Ayodhyá to rule the empire of Kosala in the name of his elder brother. At this point the original tradition of the exile of Ráma seems to have terminated; and it will suffice to add that at the expiration of the fourteen years of banishment Ráma returned to Ayodhyá with his wife and brother, and was solemnly installed on the throne of Kosala by the faithful and loyal Bharata.[25]

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[24] The details will be found in History, vol. ii. part iv., Rámáyana, chap. xiii. xiv. etc.

Disappearance of the Vedic Rishis.

The broad distinction between the life of the ancient Rishis, and that of the ancient Kshatriyas, has already been pointed out. There was an equally wide difference in their respective destinies. The Vedic Rishis, who chaunted hymns and offered sacrifice on the banks of the rivers of the Punjab, have left no relic of their existence beyond the picture of domestic and religious life which is reflected in the hymns of the Rig-Veda. For thousands of years they may have cultivated their fields, and grazed their cattle and horses, whilst developing a religious culture which was to revolutionize the old primitive worship of Hindustan. But for ages the Rishis have disappeared from the religious life of India; and their strains of natural piety have died out of the land like a poet's dream.

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[25] The original tradition of the exile of Ráma is to be found in the Buddhist chronicles, and is exhibited at length in chapter iii. on the life and teachings of Gótama Buddha.

But the Rámáyana contains an account of the exile, which belongs to a much later period, and cannot apparently have any connection with the earlier tradition. According to this later story, Ráma spent thirteen years of his exile in wandering with his wife and brother from one Brahmanical hermitage to another, in the country between the river Ganges and the river Godaveri. These journeyings extended from the hill Chitra-kúta in Bundelkund, to the modern town of Nasik, near the sources of the Godaveri, about seventy-five miles to the north-west of the modern town of Bombay. The hermitages are said to have been occupied by the old Rishis who composed the Vedic hymns, and who are represented as Bráhmans, although they must have flourished ages before the appearance of the Bráhmans. The whole narrative may therefore be dismissed as apocryphal; as a mythical invention of comparatively modern date, intended as an introduction to the tradition of another and later Ráma, who may be distinguished as the Ráma of the Dekhan. This Ráma of the Dekhan is represented to have carried on a great religious war against a Raja named Ravana, who was sovereign of the island of Ceylon, anciently known as Lanká. Ravana and his subjects are termed Rákshasas or demons; but there is reason to believe that they represent the Buddhists; and if so, the war could not have been carried on during the Vedic period, but during the Brahmanical revival, which seems to have commenced between the sixth and eighth centuries of the Christian era, and to have continued until our own time. It will accordingly be treated in chapter vii.

The Kshatriyas were men of a far different calibre. They were the conquerors of Hindustan, and they must have possessed a history; and though the annals of the conquest were not perhaps written in books, they were doubtless preserved for centuries as songs or ballads in the memory of the bards.

Absence of Kshatriya annals.

But during a later age of Brahmanical revival they were lost in religious revolution, or converted into vehicles or parables for Brahmanical teaching. Every element of historical value was eliminated. Genealogies were fabricated by unscrupulous Bráhmans for the purpose of tracing the descent of existing royal houses to the Sun and Moon, to ancient Rishis who composed the Vedic hymns, or to heroes who were present at the Swayamvara of Draupadí, or fought in the war of Mahá Bhárata. Chronology was perverted by caprice or imagination. Thousands of years were assigned to a single reign. The result is that to this day the eras of the Vedic hymns, the war of the Mahá Bhárata, the exile of Ráma, and the invasion of Hindustan by the Vedic Aryans, are as utterly unknown as the date of Stonehenge.

Probable strategy of the Aryan invaders.

But although the chronology is hopelessly lost, some idea of the progress of the Aryan invasion may be derived from a consideration of the face of the country.

The Punjab.

The Punjab has already been indicated as the Indian home of the Vedic Kshatriyas; and consequently the basis for all military operations on the part of the Vedic Aryans against the aboriginal or non-Vedic population of the valleys of the Ganges and Jumna. It is a compact territory lying to the north-west of Hindustan; and is watered by the Indus and its tributaries, which appear on the map like the sacred candlestick with seven branches.[26] The most eastern tributary of the Indus was the river Saraswatí, which formerly separated the Punjab from Hindustan. Indeed the Saraswatí was to the Vedic Aryans what the river Jordan was to the Israelites. It cut them off from the rich valleys of the Jumna and Ganges, which lay stretched out before them like a land of promise:—to the Rishis a land flowing with milk and butter; to the Kshatriyas a land of flesh-meat and savoury game.

Hindustan.

The area of the Aryan invasion thus comprised the greater part of the region between the tributaries of the Indus and the basin of the Brahmaputra; although the stream of Aryan conquest had probably spent its force before it reached Bengal. This area, known as Hindustan, was traversed from the west to the east by the rivers Jumna and Ganges, which appear on the map like an irregular two-pronged fork. The two prongs take their rise in the Himalayas near the sources of the Indus, and bend round in two parallel lines towards the south-east, until they converge, and form a junction at Allahabad, the ancient Prayága, in the centre of Hindustan. The united streams then flow in one current from Allahabad, in an easterly direction towards the ancient city of Gour. There the river elbows round towards the south, and diverges into two channels, known as the Hooghly and the Ganges, which form the delta at the head of the Bay of Bengal.

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[26] The Punjab literally signifies the land of the five rivers, namely, the Indus, the Jhelum, the Chenab, the Ravee, and the Sutlej. To these may be added the Beas and the Saraswatí, making seven rivers in all.

Importance of Allahabad.

The one point of paramount importance in all Hindustan is Allahabad, the ancient Prayága, which is seated at the junction of the Jumna and Ganges. Here the Vedic Rishis, inspired alike by poetic fancy and religious fervour, would approach the union of the two river deities with reverential awe. Here the Aryan Kshatriyas, with true military instinct, appear to have constructed a fortress which secured all the conquests on the upper valleys of the Jumna and Ganges, and overawed all lower Bengal. Accordingly Rajpoot tradition points to Prayága as the most ancient city of the Rajpoots or sons of Rajas.[27] It was the holiest place of sacrifice for the Rishis, and the most commanding stronghold for the Kshatriyas, in all Hindustan.

Three probable lines of Aryan fotresses.

The Vedic Aryans thus probably held the valleys of the Jumna and Ganges by three lines of fortresses, as indicated in the map. The first line would be formed by Indraprastha and Hastinápur at the northern entrance to the two valleys. The second line would be formed by four fortresses, each of which may have been situated about half way down their respective rivers, namely, at Agra on the Jumna, at Kanouj on the Ganges, at Lucknow on the Goomti, and at Ayodhyá on the Gogra. Further to the south and east there would be a third line of fortresses along the main stream of the Ganges, and chiefly at the junctions of rivers, namely, at Allahabad at the junction of the Jumna and Ganges;

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[27] Tod's Rajasthan, vol. i., chap. iv., p. 39.

at Benares near the junction of the Goomti and Ganges; at Patali-putra near the junction of the Sone, the Gogra, and the Ganges; and at Gour near the point where the main stream diverges into the Hooghly and Ganges.

Three stages of Aryan invasion.

It may thus be assumed that ancient Hindustan was occupied by at least ten Vedic Aryan fortresses, which were destined to become the capitals of kingdoms, the emporiums of trade, and the centres of religious thought. They would appear arranged in three lines of advance, illustrating three distinct stages of Aryan invasion, namely—the colonial, the conquering, and the imperial. During the colonial period the Vedic Aryans probably occupied the lands round Indraprastha and Hastinápur on the upper courses of the Jumna and Ganges. During the conquering period they may have advanced half way down the four important rivers which water northern Hindustan, and established a line of fortresses at Agra, Kanouj, Lucknow, and Ayodhyá. During the imperial period they may have established a third line of fortified capitals at the junctions or divergence of rivers, namely—at Allahabad, Benares, Patali-putra, and Gour.[28]

The Aryan conquest of Hindustan must have convulsed northern India, but all memories of the struggle are buried beneath a jungle of legend. It was a fabled war of gods against demons; the invaders were Aryan devatas, the deities of fire and

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[28] The above description of Vedic Aryan fortresses in Hindustan is of course conjectural. Patali-putra, somewhere near the modern Patna, became the metropolis of the Gangetic empire of Magadha. Gour, at the elbow of the Ganges, may possibly have been of Turanian rather than Aryan origin. According to old Persian tradition Gour was founded by a conqueror from Kooch Behar, a territory in the neighbourhood of the opposite elbow of the river Brahmaputra.

Legends of Aryan invasion.

light, the fair-complexioned heroes from the high lands of ancient Persia. The enemies against whom they contended, and whom they drove slowly into the east and south, were the earth-born demons of ancient India; the black-skinned barbarians, who are described with all those exaggerations of hatred and distorted fancy with which cultured invaders generally regard a race of fierce aborigines. These non-Aryan races were called Dasyus, Daityas, Asuras, Rákshasas, and Nágas. They were depicted as giants, man-eaters, hobgoblins, ghosts, and serpent kings. In other words, they propitiated ghosts and serpents, and were identified with the deities they worshipped. But still there are traces amongst the non-Aryan races of widely different stages of civilization. The giant cannibals, who haunted jungles and infested villages, were probably savages of a low type; but the Nágas, or serpent-worshippers, who lived in crowded cities, and were famous for their beautiful women and exhaustless treasures, were doubtless a civilized people, living under an organized government. Indeed, if any inference can be drawn from the epic legends, it would be that prior to the Aryan conquest, the Nága Rajas were ruling powers, who had cultivated the arts of luxury to an extraordinary degree, and yet succeeded in maintaining a protracted struggle against the Aryan invaders.

Traditions of the Nágas, or serpent-worshippers.

The traditions of the Nágas are obscure in the extreme. They point, however, to the existence of an ancient Nága empire in the Dekhan, having its capital in the modern town of Nágpore; and it may be conjectured that prior to the Aryan invasion the Nága Rajas exercised an imperial power over the greater part of the Punjab and Hindustan. Representatives of this ancient people are still living in eastern Bengal, and beyond the north-east frontier, under the names of Nágas and Nágbansis; but they are Turanians of a low type, and retain no traces of their origin beyond rude legends of their descent from some serpent ancestor, and vague memories of having immigrated from Nágpore.[29] They may be ranked amongst the so-called aborigines, who have either no religion at all, or are becoming slightly Hindúized. They are the relics of an extinct nationality, and have outlived their race. But references to the ancient Nága empire abound in Hindú story. The clearance of the jungle at Indra-prastha was effected by the expulsion of the Nágas. One of the heroes of the Mahá Bhárata had an amour with the daughter of a Nága Raja.[30] The Aryan conquest of Prayága, and other parts in India, are mythically described as a great sacrifice of serpents.[31] Occasional references to the Nágas will also appear hereafter in Buddhist and Brahmanical legend; and to this day, traces of the Nágas are to be found in numerous sculptures of the old serpent gods, and in the nomenclature of towns and villages from Nágpore in the Dekhan, to Tanja-nagarum, the modern Tanjore, in the south-east coast of the remote Peninsula.

Serpent worship: its phallic character.

The serpent worship of the Nágas has formed a powerful stimulus to religious thought from time immemorial. The serpent, with its poisoned fang, its association with the phallus, and its fabled homes in the under world, seems so suggestive of all that is terrible, sensational, and mysterious in humanity, that it will lead the imagination far beyond the limits of experience, unless the attention is strictly confined to actual data. The European regards the serpent with an instinctive antipathy; and such may have been the feeling of the Aryan invaders.[32] But this antipathy is by no means shared by the masses. The Aryan element is perhaps weakest in Bengal, and amongst the Dravidian populations of the south; and there the serpent is regarded as a beneficent deity, and is approached with reverential awe. It is propitiated as the deity of a tree, as the guardian of secret treasure, as the domestic god of the family or household, and as a symbol of the power of reproduction. In Bengal barren wives creep into the jungle to propitiate the serpent of a tree with an offering of milk, in the simple faith that by the favour of the serpent deity they may become mothers. Under such kindly aspects the poisoned fang is forgotten, and the reptile is invested with a benevolent character. But there are strong reasons to suspect that the worship of the snake, and the practice of snake charming, formed important elements in an old materialistic religion, which may at one time have prevailed amongst the Dravidian populations, and of which the memory still lingers throughout the greater part of India. In the later mythological system, the world itself is supported by the great serpent; whilst Siva and Durgá, the deities of death and reproduction, are represented with cobras in their hands as symbolical of their supposed powers.[33]

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[29] Dalton's Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal, pp. 169, 231, etc.

[30] See *ante*, p. 36.

[31] History, vol. i., part v., Mahá Bhárata, pp. 46, 74, 141, 411, *et seq.*

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[32] The great god of the later Aryans was Vishnu, a spiritual conception of a supreme deity which grew out of the worship of the sun god. The antipathy of Vishnu towards the Nágas, is shown by his being represented as riding on the man-bird Garuda, the devourer of serpents and remorseless enemy of the serpent race.

Collision between nature worship and phallic worship.

The results of the collision between the nature worship of the Aryans, and the phallic worship of the Nágas and Dravidians, must be in a great measure left to conjecture. But one new and important form of religious thought appears to have been an outgrowth of the collision, and has for thousands of years exercised a paramount influence over the Indian mind. This was Brahmanism, or the worship of the supreme spirit as Brahma, which was taught by a class of holy men or sacred philosophers, known as Bráhmans. This religious question, however, must be reserved for a separate chapter. Meantime it may be as well to bring under review such information as can be gathered from ancient legends and inscriptions regarding the original forms of government which prevailed in India, and to ascertain how far they may be traced in the governments of modern times.

Hindú constitution. Village communities of landholders.

The political organization of the people of India, whether Aryan or Dravidian, seems to have borne a general resemblance to that of the Teutonic people.

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[33] The part played by the serpent in the later mythological systems of the Hindús, will be further illustrated in dealing with the history of the Brahmanical revival in chap. vii. It may, however, be remarked that the worship of the serpent was almost universal in ancient times. It appears in Egypt as well as in India; in the garden of Eden where it tempted Eve, and in the temple of Jerusalem where it was broken up by Hezekiah. According to Greek tradition the Scythian race was fabled to be descended from Herakles and the serpent woman Echidna (Herod. iv. 9, 10); and the people of Burma claim to be descended in a like manner from a mother half serpent and half woman. Doubtless it was the traditional hatred of the serpent, combined with a morbid animosity against the fair sex, that led Milton to personify Sin as

"Woman to the waist and fair,
But ended foul in many a scaly fold."

It originated in the clearance of primeval forests by the pioneers of humanity. Bands of colonists appear like the Pándavas to have migrated from some parent settlement, and cleared the jungle with fire and axe; and finally to have established new homes and means of livelihood, without throwing off the ties of allegiance and kindred to the parent stem.[34] Every new clearance gradually grew into a village; and every village became subject to those internal changes and revolutions which are inseparable from the progress of the human race. In the first instance the village was probably formed by a group of colonists, who cultivated the lands in their collective capacity for their common benefit; and it is not improbable that in this primitive stage of colonial society, the rude system of polyandry prevailed similar to that which was practised by the Pándavas. But the idea of landed property seems from a very remote antiquity to have followed a corresponding development to those of marriage and family. In due course the village comprised a community of independent householders, each of whom had his own family, his own homestead, his one separate parcel of arable land for cultivation, and a common right to the neighbouring pastures. The multiplication of families was followed by new clearances; and thus the deep forest was more and more brought under the subjection of man, and cultivation advanced with the increase of the population. But whilst the individual householder was the supreme head of his own family within the limits of his own homestead, he was bound as a member of the village community to conform to all its multifarious rules and usages as regards the order of cultivation, and the common rights of his neighbours to graze their cattle on the pastures. In the present day the independence and privacy of the family are maintained by the Hindús to an extent which renders their domestic life a sealed book to Europeans; whilst land is regarded more and more in the light of property, belonging as strictly to the family as the homestead in which they dwell.[35] The ancient village community of independent landholders, governed by common rules and usages, naturally acquired a political organization of its own. It comprised the homesteads of

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[34] Besides the mythic account of the colonization of Indraprastha by the Pándavas, which is to be found in its original form in History, vol. i., Mahá Bhárata, chap. v., a valuable tradition has been preserved of the colonization of the great forest in the southern peninsula, which was carried out in the days of the old Rajas of Chola, or Chola mandalum, the Choromandel or Coromandel of the seventeenth century. In ancient times the kingdom of Chola occupied the lower Carnatic between the eastern ghats and the sea; but the region north of the river Palar was a dense jungle. According to a legend preserved in the Mackenzie manuscripts, a Raja of Chola took a Nága lady, either as his wife or concubine, by whom he had a son whom the people would not accept as their Raja. Accordingly the prince went out with a miscellaneous band of emigrants, slaves and volunteers, and began to make clearances and establish villages in the forest northward of the Palar. During the first six years no share of the crops was to be claimed by the Chola Raja. For the seventh year of cultivation the emigrants were to pay one-tenth of the produce as land tax; for the eighth year one-ninth; for the ninth year one-eighth; and for the tenth year one-seventh; and for all following years one-sixth. See Mackenzie MSS. in the Library of the Bengal Asiatic Society, vol. i.

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[35] Maine's Lectures on Village Communities. Stubbs's Constitutional History of England, chaps. ii. and iii. Elphinstone's History of India, Book II. chap. ii. As regards the Teutonic communities Sir Henry Maine observes that the land was always originally distributed into exactly equal proportions, corresponding to the number of families in the township; and that at first the proprietary equality of these families was further secured by a periodical re-distribution of the several consignments. He adds that traditions of this periodical distribution are still preserved in Indian villages, and that the disuse of the practice is sometimes mentioned as a grievance. Some further evidence as regards the existence of these traditions would be valuable. Probably they refer to the ancient system of cultivation, known as the Joom system, in which a portion of the jungle is burnt down and serves as manure. This system is still in vogue amongst hill tribes, and necessitates an annual removal to different lands during a period of ten years.

CHAPTER I.

the different families; the several allotments of arable lands; and the common land for pasture. Its affairs were conducted by a council of elders; or by the council in association with a head man, who was either elected to the post by the village community, or succeeded to it as a hereditary right.[36]

Village officials and artisans.

The village thus became not only the basis of a political organization, but the type of the kingdom of which it was an individual member. The head man corresponded to the Raja; the council of elders to the council of chiefs and people. At a later period of development each village had its own officials, such as the accountant, the watchman,[37] the priest, the physician, and the musician. It also had its own artisans, as the blacksmith, the carpenter, the worker in leather, the tailor, the potter, and the barber. These officers and artisans were generally hereditary, and were supported by grants of land rent free, or by fees contributed by the landholders in grain or perhaps in money.

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[36] The general type of a Hindú village remains much the same in the present day, but in the course of ages the organization of individual villages has been greatly modified by their individual histories, especially as regards the mode of paying the annual land revenue to the ruling power. Three different revenue systems may be especially mentioned, namely, the village joint-rent system, the ryotwary, and the zemindary. Under the joint-rent system, the inhabitants of each village pay through their head man a yearly lump sum for the whole of their lands; and thus they are left to allot to each one of their number the lands he is to cultivate and the yearly contribution he is to pay. In the ryotwary system the government takes the rent direct from each individual ryot, or village landholder. In the zemindary system the revenue is collected through a middle man, known as a zemindar, whose powers vary with circumstances, and range from those of a tax collector to those of a baron.

Besides the village landholders there are four other classes, namely, permanent tenants, temporary tenants, labourers, and shopkeepers. But wherever there are village landholders, they form the first class of inhabitants.

[37] The duties of the watchman are more multifarious than the name seems to convey. He is the guardian of boundaries, public and private. He watches the crops, and is the public guide and messenger. He observes all the arrivals and departures; and next to the head man, is the principal officer of police.

Groups of villages formed into provinces.

The ties which bound these villages together in groups were never very strong. Manu refers to lords of ten, twenty, a hundred, and a thousand villages; and traces of the ancient distribution are still lingering in such names as pergunnah and zillah. Since the introduction of the British government as the paramount power the villages still remain, but have been grouped into districts, and placed under the charge of district officers, according to the convenience of the local administration. In this way the villages have existed in some shape from time immemorial. Towns have grown out of the villages, or been formed of clusters of villages. To use the words of Lord Metcalfe, "the village communities are little republics, having nearly everything they can want within themselves, and almost independent of any foreign relations. They seem to last when nothing else lasts. Dynasty after dynasty remains the same; revolution succeeds to revolution; Hindú, Patan, Mogul, Mahratta, Sikh, English, are all masters in turn; but the village community remains the same." [38]

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[38] Report of Select Committee of House of Commons, 1832. Quoted by Elphinstone. The village system prevails over the greater part of India, but has faded away from Bengal.

CHAPTER II.

RETROSPECT OF BRAHMANIC INDIA.

CHAPTER II.

Obscure origin of the Bráhmans: a sacred caste of hereditary priests.

THE origin of the Bráhmans is one of the most obscure points in the annals of ancient India. They are barely mentioned in the Vedic hymns, and certainly were not recognized as a dominant hierarchy during the period when the Vedic Aryans were as yet confined to the Punjab. But in every later stage of their history, and down to the present day, they have been represented as a hereditary and exclusive caste of holy men, specially created out of the mouth of the god Brahma for the performance of sacrificial rites, and also for the conservation of sacred learning, and the interpretation of the Sanskrit scriptures, which are emphatically known as the Vedas.[1] Moreover, throughout the whole of

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[1] Further particulars respecting the Bráhmans and the Vedas will be found in the two previous volumes of the History which deal with the Hindú Epics and the Laws of Manu. But the following details will suffice to explain the statement in the text.

The Hindús are divided into an infinite number of castes, according to their hereditary trades and professions; but in the present day they are nearly all comprehended in four great castes, namely, the Bráhmans, or priests; the Kshatriyas, or soldiers; the Vaisysas, or merchants; and the Súdras, or servile class. The Bráhmans are the mouth of Brahma; the Kshatriyas are his arms; the Vaisysas are his thighs; and the Súdras are his feet.

The three first castes of priests, soldiers, and merchants, are distinguished from the fourth caste of Súdras by the thread, or paita, which is worn depending from the left shoulder and resting on the right side below the loins. The investiture usually takes place between the eighth and twelfth year, and is known as the their history, and down to a comparatively modern date, their claims to the respect of all other castes appear to have increased from age to age; until at last they have been hedged around with a superstitious reverence approaching to worship. Notwithstanding the spread of western civilization and enlightenment, this reverence for the Bráhmans continues to retain a deep and inscrutable hold upon the imagination of the masses. It is no disgrace, but rather a religious duty, and an act of religious merit, for the mightiest Raja to pay homage to the meanest Bráhman; and this conviction is strengthened by the ignorant belief that the blessing of a Bráhman will be followed by good fortune and prosperity, whilst his curse will bring the direst calamities upon the impious offender. Moreover, even those Bráhmans who have never exercised any religious or priestly calling, and have devoted themselves to secular concerns, are still regarded as of divine origin, and consequently entitled to homage. The Bráhman sepoy will implicitly obey his commanding officer, although of an inferior caste; but when the military duty is over, and the uniform is laid aside, the officer falls back into his inferior position and propitiates the Bráhman with reverential awe.

The secular Bráhmans, however, may be excluded for the present from all consideration. They were

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second birth, and those who are invested are termed the "twice born." It is difficult to say whether the thread indicates a separation between the conquerors and the conquered; or whether it originated in a religious investiture from which Súdras were excluded.

As regards the four Vedas, the Rig-Veda is the oldest and most important. The Rig-Veda is divided into three portions, each of which indicates a certain stage in religious development, namely, the hymn of prayer and praise, the sacrificial ritual, and the metaphysical worship of the supreme spirit under a variety of names. Technically they are known as mantras, brahmanas, and upanishads.

nothing more than men who were born within the caste of priests, but who followed other pursuits. The Bráhmans who devoted themselves to a religious calling are alone invested with historical significance. They appear in two distinct capacities, namely, as priests or sacrificers, and as sages or philosophers.

Distinction between the priests or sacrificers, and the sages or philosophers.

The priest was generally a married householder, who maintained his family after the manner of ancient priests. He performed sacrifices for hire. He officiated at births, deaths and marriages. He appeared occasionally as a seer, diviner, genealogist, astrologer, school-master, expounder of the law, and worker of spells and incantations. Moreover, the presentation of alms to the Bráhmans had always been regarded as a religious duty, which expiated sins, and promoted the prosperity of the giver; and thus in a superstitious age, the Bráhman priest was generally well provided for. Sometimes he lived in the neighbourhood of a temple, or in a street appropriated to Bráhmans; but there was nothing beyond his religious or semi-religious avocations to distinguish him from the ordinary type of the Hindú householder. The Bráhman sage, on the other hand, was supposed to have no thought or care for his daily subsistence. He abstracted himself from all public and social life, and dwelt in the retirement of a grove or hermitage, where he subsisted on roots and fruits, or on such alms as the people of the neighbourhood might choose to offer him. In this manner he prepared himself by religious duties, pious studies, sacred contemplations, and fasting and other penances, for a more spiritual life hereafter. Sometimes the sage was married, or at any rate passed a portion of his life in matrimony; for as he belonged to a hereditary caste, it was gen-

generally considered necessary that he should become the father of a son. Some sages, however, led lives of celibacy, and kept but one object in view throughout their lives, namely, the purification of the soul from every stain of affection, desire, and passion, so that after death it might return to the supreme spirit. The distinction between these two classes of priest and sage must be borne constantly in mind. Occasionally the characteristics of both are blended in the same individual. The illiterate priest will affect to be a sage, and perform religious contemplations and austerities; or the sage will practise daily sacrifices as part of his religious duties in the seclusion of the grove or hermitage. Again, both classes are included under the general name of Bráhmans, which seems to have been borrowed from the term Brahma, which signifies both the supreme spirit and divine knowledge. But still a line of demarcation has been preserved between the mercenary sacrificers and the pious and contemplative sages.[2]

Popular religion of the Bráhman priests.

The priests or sacrificers form the bulk of the Brahmanical community; and their religious ideas and practices seem to have been always of a popular and primitive character. They were prepared to sacrifice, that is, to offer food and liquor, to any and every deity whom the people desired to propitiate, whether they belonged to the Vedic or non-Vedic population. Two deities were specially worshipped by the Bráhman priests, and appear to have been the types of two different races, the Aryans and the Turanians. These were Vishnu and Siva; sometimes propitiated under the names of Hari and

Vishnu, Siva, and Brahma.

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[2] For a learned exposition on the term Bráhman, see Muir's Sanskrit Texts, vol. i. second edition, chap. iii.

Mahádeva. The Greeks identified these two gods with Herakles and Dionysos. Vishnu was an old Vedic conception more or less associated with the Sun; but he appears in the Hindú pantheon as an embodiment of heroic strength and god-like beauty. Siva was a mystic deity of Turanian origin, and represented as half-intoxicated with drugs, and associated with ideas of death and reproduction. To these may be added a third deity, Brahma, who was worshipped as the supreme spirit who created and pervades the universe. In the present day, all three,—Brahma, Vishnu and Siva,—are often individually and collectively identified with the one supreme being.

Animal sacrifices.

In ancient times the ritual of the Bráhmans included the sacrifice of animals, such as beasts and birds; although at some extraordinary epoch to be noticed hereafter the slaughter of animals was prohibited, and offerings of rice and butter were introduced in their stead.[3] The Bráhmans naturally arrogated to themselves the exclusive right to perform sacrifices. They declared that if sacrificers were employed who did not belong to the Bráhman caste, the deity would be offended rather than propitiated. At the same time they exaggerated the power and efficacy of sacrifice. It was considered to be always grateful to the gods, and if performed with certain ceremonial and mystic utterances, it would ensure victory, dominion, and every prosperity. The Bráhman priests also professed to ascertain from the appearance of the victim, and from the colour and form of the sacrificial flame, whether the offering was acceptable or otherwise. Finally, they taught that sacrifice was a great religious merit, which would not only prove pleasing to deity, and win the divine interposition in behalf of the worshipper, but would act as an atonement or expiation for sins committed against the moral and religious laws.[4]

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[3] Annual sacrifices formed a part of the ritual of the Brahmana of the Rig-Veda, known as the Aitareya Brahmana. (See Dr Haug's edition of the original Sanskrit text accompanied by an English translation, 2 vols. Bombay, 1863.) Such sacrifices were considered allowable by Manu, although the practice was deprecated. (See History, vol. ii., Brahmanic Period, chap. x.) Animal sacrifices were abolished by Asoka about the third century before Christ. See *infra*, chapter v., Buddhist India.

The Bráhmans, however, from a very early period presented such simple offerings to the gods as boiled rice and clarified butter, after the manner of the ancient Rishis. But in the old Brahmanical ritual these offerings were invested with a mystic meaning which was apparently unknown to the Rishis. Thus rice signified the male principle, and melted butter the female. The so-called sacrifice was thus associated with the materialistic religion of the non-Vedic population. (Haug's Aitareya Brahmana, Book I. chap. i.) This fact throws a new light upon the legend of Cain and Abel. Cain offered the first-fruits of the ground; Abel the first-fruits of the flock. The flesh sacrifice was accepted; but the vegetable offering was rejected. So far it would seem that the story was intended to enforce sacerdotal ideas. But offerings of grain were especially associated with a materialistic religion, as in the Greek worship of Demeter; and this form of idolatry was condemned in the strongest terms by the Hebrew prophets. Hence the offering of Cain was rejected.

Origin of the doctrine of atonement.

The doctrine of atonement by sacrifice indicates an important stage in religious development. There certainly was no idea of atonement in the so-called sacrifices of the Vedic Rishis, or the flesh-feasts of the Kshatriyas. Such an idea must have originated in a sacerdotal age, when sacrifices were a source of profit to the Bráhmans; and also in an age of settled government, when sinners were supposed to expiate their sins by sacrifices, penances, and almsgiving, in the same way that criminals expiate their offences by punishment and fines.[5]

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[4] It would be an endless task to review the interminable ritual of Brahmanical sacrifices. Much of it was associated with ideas appertaining to the sexes, which apparently indicate a non-Vedic origin. Thus the Díkshá ceremony is nothing more than a symbolical representation of the neophyte being born again. Haug's Aitareya Brahmana, Book I. chap. i.

[5] It is a significant fact that religious development often runs in the same

CHAPTER II.

Secret religion of the Bráhman sages.

The religion of the Bráhman sages or philosophers was of a totally different character from that of the priests. It was not promulgated to the masses, but only communicated to the philosophic few. It does not appear to have been a foreign worship, but indigenous to India, growing out of the existing creeds, but in the first instance abstracting itself as far as possible from the prevailing idolatries. It thus takes the form of a secret religion, which was taught only as a mystery; and probably this was its character in a remote antiquity. This Brahmanical teaching involves three distinct dogmas, namely—the creation of the universe, the supreme spirit pervading the universe, and the transmigrations of souls. These dogmas will be found of considerable importance in dealing with the progress of religious development in India; and therefore it will be necessary to consider them separately in their elementary and oriental form.

Creation of the universe by the supreme spirit Brahma.

The idea of a creation of the universe seems to have been generally formed at a comparatively late stage in religious development. Primitive man accepts the universe as it is; as something which has existed from time immemorial, and will continue to exist for an indefinable period. He may form rude conceptions of ancestors and first parents, but

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groove as political development. In patriarchal times, as in the days of the Rishis, the head of the family or tribe performed the duties of the priest. But when monarchical government assumed an organized form, it was generally accompanied by an ecclesiastical hierarchy having a similar organization. The sovereign had his ministers; the deity had his priests. The sovereign made known his will by means of edicts; the deity made known his will by means of oracles. The ministers claimed a share of the harvests and flocks, and the payment of tribute or taxes, for the service of the sovereign. The priests in like manner claimed first-fruits, firstlings, and tythes for the service of deity. Again, the ministers chastised offenders by fine and punishment; and the priests chastised sinners by enforcing almsgiving, sacrifices, and penances.

his curiosity goes no further. Men are born, and that is the beginning of them; they die, and that is the end of them. But in process of time his imagination plays upon his affections until he believes in ghosts; and then his natural sense of justice suggests places of punishment or reward for these ghosts. A consideration of the end of being necessarily leads to a consideration of the origin of being. Then follows an unrecorded age of speculation, which the modern mind can neither realize nor follow. The Hebrew conception of deity was that of a sovereign ruler; and consequently the work of creation was carried out by the vivifying breath of Elohim, moving upon the face of the waters, and calling the universe into existence by the divine command.[6] The Phœnician idea was more mystical; ether became enamoured of chaos, and produced a watery mixture or mud from which sprung the seed of the creation.[7] The Brahmanical conception was of the same character, but more materialistic in its expression. The god Brahma placed a productive seed in the waste of waters, which germinated into an egg, and finally expanded into the universe of gods, men, and living creatures.[8]

This idea of the creation by Brahma may have

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[6] Von Bohlen's Genesis, vol. ii. p. 8. London, 1868.

[7] Sanchoniatho, in Cory's Fragments.

[8] Manu's account of the creation has already been analyzed and criticized at length. See History, vol. ii., part v., Brahmanic Period, chap. v. It will suffice to say that the phallic idea sufficiently predominates to prove that Brahma was originally a phallic deity. The creation of the universe was very generally symbolized by an egg enfolded by a serpent. This has been interpreted to represent the union of ether and chaos. It seems, however, to have originated in the far more materialistic idea that the serpent, as a symbol of the phallus, was imparting life to the egg as a symbol of the universe. The serpent finds no expression in the original Brahmanical cosmogony. In modern cosmogony Sesha Nága, or the great snake, appears as the supporter of the universe.

Pantheistic idea of the supreme spirit pervading the universe.

been borrowed from the materialistic religion of the non-Vedic population. But the second idea of a supreme spirit pervading the universe was either an outgrowth of the Vedic worship of the elements, or was modified by that worship into a spiritual form. If fire, water, and ether were regarded as deities by the Vedic Aryans, they might easily be accepted by the Bráhmans as the manifestations of that creative force which was involved in the conception of Brahma. In this way the Bráhmans appear to have elevated their god Brahma to the highest dignity over the gods of the invaders, by representing him as a supreme spirit who pervaded the universe; as the divine original from whom had emanated all the Vedic Aryan deities, as well as the human race and the whole range of living creatures.

Dogma of the metempsychosis, or transmigrations of the soul.

The third and last dogma, namely, that of the transmigrations of the soul after death, seems to have had a different origin. It finds no expression in the Vedic hymns, and, indeed, could scarcely have been evolved out of the Vedic religion. It appears rather to have grown out of the mysteries of death and reproduction, which were associated with the worship of the serpent and linga. If life was followed by death, so death might only be the introduction into a new life; in other words, after the death of the body, the soul entered a new body, either of a human being or an animal. The ancient religion of Egypt was evidently derived from the same materialistic source, and had developed into the same speculative belief, that the soul was immortal, and that when it had passed through its allotted course in one body, it entered another body. The Bráhman sages imparted a deep religious significance to this dogma. They taught that each successive existence was a reward or a punishment exactly proportioned to the good or evil deeds that had been performed in previous existences; that the poorest man might enjoy wealth and prosperity in the next life by being strictly virtuous and religious in the present life; and that the most powerful sovereign might be condemned to poverty and disease in the next life, if he failed in his religious duties in the present life. The chain of transmigrations was not confined to humanity, but extended over the whole range of animated being. A virtuous animal might thus become a happy man; and a wicked man might become a miserable worm or reptile.[9] This chain of existences was practically eternal; although, as will be seen hereafter, there is a saving clause, that if the soul be sufficiently purified from all the passions and desires of existence, it will return to the supreme spirit Brahma, from whom it had originally emanated.[10]

Lifeless character of the conceptions of a creation and creator.

The Brahmanical conception of the creation may be dismissed as a metaphysical dream; devoid of all humanity, although grossly material. The conception of the creator as a supreme spirit is equally devoid of religious significance. It may have amused the imagination, but it utterly failed to reach the heart. It has been much over-valued in consequence of its supposed identification with the one God, who is worshipped by Jews and Christians. But Brahma was not a personal deity. He was neither a universal ruler nor an eternal father. The idea of Brahma was simply a deification of a primeval male, who created the universe, pervaded the universe, and governed the universe like an unseen machine, whose movements were regulated by inexorable laws. This conception of a supreme spirit was formed by divesting all the Vedic deities of their human sympathies and feelings; of every attribute, in fact, which endeared them to their worshippers, and rendered them objects of devotion and adoration; and then resolving all that remained into one immaterial essence. It is obvious that so far the theology of the Bráhmans was without any moral meaning. It satisfied no yearning, furnished no consolation, and utterly ignored the affections. But without human sympathies, theology soon dies away into a metaphysical dream. They are the life-blood of theology. Man cannot worship deity, any more than he can worship beauty, excepting through the medium of humanity.

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[9] This dogma of the metempsychosis, or "ever changing habitations of the soul," is often stated with arithmetical precision. If the sum of good deeds exceeds the sum of evil deeds in previous lives, the individual soul will be born in a higher scale of being, and enjoy a degree of happiness in exact proportion to the balance of merits. If, on the contrary, the sum of evil deeds is in excess, the individual soul will be born in a lower scale of being, and suffer a degree of misery in exact proportion to the balance of demerits.

[10] This dogma of the return of the human soul to its creator has originated a controversy as to whether the human soul became absorbed in the divine spirit, or enjoyed a separate and individual existence in what may be called the heaven of the divine spirit, i. e. the heaven of Brahma. The controversy is of no practical moment, although to this day it continues to excite sectarian discussions.

Antagonism between the metempsychosis and the old theology.

It seems difficult to understand the circumstances under which the Bráhman sages could have formed such a speculative conception as that of a supreme spirit creating and pervading the universe. There is nothing to show why the worship of the gods, as practised by the Bráhman priests from time immemorial, should have been sapped of all its vitality by the introduction of a metaphysical element which could have recommended itself only to the philosophic few. It is certain, however, that at some remote and unrecorded period, the religious life of the eastern world received a shock by the promulgation of the dogma of the transmigration of souls from which it has never recovered. This doctrine dawned upon humanity like a new religion, and threatened to overwhelm the worship of the gods, and to break down every barrier of caste. The idea that the soul after death entered a new body, either of a human being or an animal, is by no means an unnatural one. It pleased the imagination, for it accounted for certain marks of human intelligence in animal life, whilst imparting a deep significance to the whole range of animated being. It further recommended itself to the reason, because it solved a problem which had distressed the human race from time immemorial. Thoughtful men, the socialists of ancient days, saw good and evil scattered over the universe by a blind fatality, which was not only unintelligible, but contrary to the common sense of justice. Wealth and poverty, pleasure and pain, prosperity and adversity, beauty and deformity, strength and infirmity, were showered down like undistinguishing rain upon the just and unjust, without the slightest reference to their moral or religious deserts. The virtuous man was often wretched, and the wise man a beggar; whilst the wicked man was often prosperous, and the fool was burdened with riches. The dogma of the metempsychosis removed every difficulty. Men could no longer rail at the blindness of fortune, or rail at the injustice of the gods, when they had accepted the law under which all

Profound significance of the dogma of the metempsychosis.

good and evil fortunes were regarded as the results of actions which had taken place in previous lives, and which had long since passed out of the memory and conscious experience of the individual.[11]

The promulgation of the dogma of the metempsychosis, or "ever-changing habitations of the soul," indicates a further stage in the progress of religious development, which corresponds in some measure to a revolt against the gods. The doctrine of atonement by sacrifice had marked a certain advance in theology. The gods were no longer mere guardian deities to be gratified with meat and wine. They had assumed the form of divine rulers, who governed the world like despots, and demanded sacrifices, penances, and offerings in expiation of any infringement of their laws. A gloomy superstition was thus imparted to the national religion, which was calculated to chill the old enthusiastic devotion which sprung from the affections. Under such circumstances it may be assumed that the enlightened few had grown dissatisfied with the popular conception of deity and sacerdotal worship. The dogma of the metempsychosis was the expression of a de-

A revolt against the popular worship of the gods.

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[11] This dogma of the metempsychosis re-acted in its turn upon the conception of Brahma as the supreme spirit. Brahma was self-existent as the supreme soul. As the individual soul passed through endless transmigrations, so the supreme soul passed through endless creations. Each universe was supposed to endure for about five milliards of years, and was then followed by a chaos which lasted for a similar period. Each successive universe was supposed to be a day of Brahma; and each successive chaos was supposed to be a night of Brahma. The fabled chronology of the Bráhmans thus vanishes away into a childish dream. Brahma awakes and the universe springs into being; he sleeps and it sinks into chaos. A day and night occupies ten milliards of years. The year of Brahma comprises three hundred and sixty of these days; and Brahma will exist for a hundred years. Practically Brahma is eternal. A distinction has also been made between Brahma, the supreme spirit, and Brahmá, the creative force. The point is of no practical importance. See History, vol. ii., part v., Brahmanic Period, chaps. i and v.

mocratic revolt against the irresponsible despotism of the gods. It struck at the root of theology, for it taught that man by his own acts could raise himself higher and higher in the scale of being. It deprived death of all its terrors by representing it as a new birth into a better and happier life. It was, in fact, a religion of good works, as opposed to a theology based upon a conventional faith. But it could make no permanent breach in the sacerdotal religion of the Bráhman priests; and it utterly failed to carry the old Indian gods by storm. It has left its mark on the religion of the Bráhman sages; but they only formed a limited class of the community. It still lingers as an idea in the mind of the general population, and finds expression in conventional language, but it exercises no perceptible influence upon the religious life of the masses.[12]

Religion of the Bráhman sages —a compromise between the metempsychosis and the old theology.

The religion of the Bráhman sages was indeed little more than a compromise between the new philosophy of the metempsychosis and the old sacerdotal theology. They accepted the dogma of the metempsychosis, but were not prepared to abandon the ideas of worship and deity. They did not interfere with the popular religion of the masses. They left it in the hands of the priests or sacrificers, whilst they retired to the seclusion of their groves and hermitages, and wrought out a new and comprehensive religion of their own. They imparted a philosophic character to the old theology by teach-

Popular religion of the Bráhman priests unaffected by the metempsychosis.

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[12] This is only true as regards modern Hindús. It will be seen hereafter that the dogma of the metempsychosis exercised a very powerful influence amongst the Buddhists of ancient India, as it does to this day amongst the Buddhists of Burma.

ing their disciples that all the gods of the universe were resolved into the conception of the supreme spirit Brahma; and they imparted a theological character to the new philosophy by teaching that the primary object of the truly wise should be to escape from the bondage of successive transmigrations, and become absorbed in the supreme spirit, and thus enter upon an indefinable existence of eternal beatitude. In this manner the old ideas of sacrifice and penance were brought into play, but under new forms. They were not atonements for sin, but purifications of the soul. Sages devoted themselves to the contemplation of the supreme spirit in the universe, and to excessive mortifications of the flesh, in the hope of thereby reducing themselves to mere abstractions; and it was doubtless by such an utter abnegation of humanity that they excited the superstitious awe of the populace, and invested themselves with the halo of divinity, which still finds expression in the national sentiment.[13] Meantime the old gods were never abandoned by the masses. Indeed the worship of the gods is an instinct of ordinary humanity. Men have always aspired to please the divine rulers and guardians of the universe, by special acts of adoration, and the celebration of special festivals in their honour. Whilst therefore the Hindús may have listened to metaphysical teaching, and paid reverence to the philosophic sages, they continued to employ the Bráhman priests to perform the old sacrifices and ceremonial which had been practised by their forefathers from time immemorial. They believed that whilst the gods were duly worshipped, the country prospered; and this conviction could not be shaken by the dogmas of a supreme spirit and the transmigrations of the soul.

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[13] The sacred books of the Hindús are filled with the stories of sages and saints who engaged for a long term of years in constant sacrifices, severe austerities, and deep abstract contemplations of the supreme being in his various manifestations. By these performances they were fabled to acquire such supernatural powers that they could drink up seas, remove mountains, change the courses of rivers, and compel the gods generally to fulfil their behests. These no doubt were the outgrowth of popular superstitions, fostered by the Bráhman priests as throwing a reflex glory over the whole caste.

Stages in the history of the Bráhmans: originally sacrificers to all the gods.

It may now be possible to indicate the more important stages in the history of the Bráhmans generally. In that remote age which may have preceded the Aryan invasion, the Bráhmans were probably the priests of a phallic deity named Brahma, from whom they derived their distinctive name.[14] Subsequently, in the character of a hereditary priesthood, they officiated as sacrificers to all the gods, whether of the conquerors or the conquered. This spirit of conciliation or comprehension has always characterized the Bráhmans, and is perhaps the main cause of their success. They identified foreign gods with their own; and then by virtue of their hereditary rank they officiated in the worship of all.[15] The Aryan conquerors, the Kshatriyas of the epics, had previously been their own priests; but they could have had no objection to employ the Bráhmans as sacrificers. The Bráhmans probably were Aryans like themselves, and had already established a powerful influence over the general population. Moreover, they must have made a deep impression upon the Kshatriyas; for whilst the priests, properly so called, appeared as a sacerdotal caste of sacred origin, the sages were supposed to be endowed with divine wisdom and supernatural power by virtue of their rites and austerities.

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[14] The caste system of both India and Egypt seems to have originated in the worship of the phallus.

[15] They thus identified Agni, the Vedic deity of fire, with their own god Brahma, the supreme spirit. Other identifications will be mentioned hereafter in chap. vii.

Development of the Bráhmans into a national priesthood.

Thus in process of time the Bráhmans would be recognized by the Kshatriyas as the only agents between man and deity; as the only priests who were authorized to offer sacrifice. Henceforth they became identified with the Aryan invaders, and every conquest effected by the Kshatriyas outside the Brahmanical pale was followed by the introduction and establishment of the Brahmanical hierarchy. The Vedic Rishis either disappeared, or became absorbed in the Brahmanical community; and perhaps the same fate attended the priests and bards of other races. In this manner the Bráhmans ultimately became the one national priesthood of India. They officiated in the public temples and in private dwellings, at festival celebrations and in family or domestic worship. They performed all the great ceremonies on such state occasions as the consecration of Rajas, the commencement of hostilities, the thanksgivings for victory, the propitiation of offended deity in times of defeat, drought, or pestilence. They also performed the necessary rites at births, deaths, marriages, the sowing of seed, the gathering in of harvest, the building of dwellings, the planting of trees, the digging of wells, and other similar incidents in the life of humanity. They also cast nativities, practised divinations, prognosticated future events, and uttered spells or incantations over weapons and implements of every kind. These pursuits they continued not only after the Aryan conquest, but down to the present day; and at the same time they took the place of the Rishis at the worship of the Vedic deities, and sacrificed at the great Yajnas, or flesh-feasts of the Kshatriyas.

Pretensions of the Bráhmans.

The Bráhmans, however, assert that they are representatives of the ancient Rishis who composed the Vedic hymns, and that they have formed a dominant spiritual hierarchy from time immemorial. They have divided themselves into eight Gotrás, or families, corresponding to the eight famous Rishis from whom they claim to have descended. For ages they have been the sole conservators of the Vedic scriptures, which they regard as having been more or less inspired by their god Brahma. As a natural consequence their pretensions have been generally admitted; and the worship of the supreme spirit, as the creator of the universe, and the dogma of the transmigrations of the soul, have been regarded as an outgrowth of the old Vedic worship. But it has already been seen that the assumed origin of the distinctive religion of the Bráhman sages is open to question. Again, the Indian home of the Vedic Aryans was in the Punjab, to the westward of the river Saraswatí. The Indian home of the Bráhmans was apparently in Hindustan, and extended from the Saraswatí eastward to the banks of the Ganges, in the neighbourhood of the ancient city of Kanouj.[16] Moreover, the Rishis were not formed into a caste, nor does any authentic allusion to caste distinctions occur in the earlier Vedic hymns. The Bráhmans, on the contrary, are represented from a very ancient period as forming an exclusive and hereditary priest caste; and much of their religious teaching turns upon their caste distinctions.

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[16] See History, vol. ii., part v., Brahmanic Period, chap. ii.

Bráhmans regarded by the Kshatriyas as an inferior caste.

These marks of difference between the Vedic Rishis and the Bráhmans are all the more worthy of notice, from the fact that in ancient times neither the Rishis nor the Kshatriyas entertained that respect for the Bráhmans which has been displayed in more modern times. The Bráhmans had undoubtedly made their way into the Punjab, whilst the Vedic Aryans were mere colonists in the land. But the Rishis composed satirical hymns against the Bráhmans, which have been preserved to the present day. They compared the penances of the Bráhmans to the torpid condition of frogs during the dry season; and they likened the utterances of the Bráhmans at their sacrifices to the croaking of the same animals. They, moreover, ridiculed the vows of celibacy which were occasionally taken by Bráhman sages, by humourous representations of the complaints of neglected wives.[17] The Kshatriyas, also, who engaged the Bráhmans to officiate as priests, regarded them with a certain contempt as mere mercenary sacrificers, who were guilty of an unpardonable assumption if they attempted to establish themselves on an equality of position with the military community.[18]

Status of Bráhman sages.

In a subsequent age, when the primitive conception of Brahma became amplified into the dogmas of a supreme spirit, and the transmigrations of the soul, the bulk of the Bráhmans must have presented the same heterogeneous character which they still retain. Indeed it would only have been the more advanced sages of the caste, the intellectual literati, who could apprehend and expound the mysteries of the new philosophy. Such sages must have been very far removed above the illiterate priests of temple and domestic life. They appeared, in fact, as the pious few, who abstracted themselves from all worldly concerns, and dwelt under trees and groves in the outskirts of towns and villages. Here their ostensible object was to purge their souls from all earthly passions; to render themselves superior to all pleasure and pain, and indifferent to all sensations and emotions; so that after death their purified spirit might return to Brahma. With this view they entered upon a holy life of temperance and chastity, subsisted on a vegetable diet, practised severe austerities, performed a daily religious ceremonial and sacrifice, and mortified the flesh in every possible way. Such were the Bráhmans as they appeared at the advent of Gótama Buddha and Alexander the Great. They were each attended by disciples to whom they expounded all the mysteries of their religion, and taught the various ways by which the fervent worshipper could devote the whole energies of his body and soul to the contemplation of the supreme spirit. Many of them were founders of different schools of metaphysics, all tending to the same conclusion although pursued through different labyrinths of bewildering thought; namely, that the universe was contained in the supreme spirit; that all living beings were originally emanations from that spirit; and that all were subject to the law of transmigrations until they were sufficiently purified to return to the supreme spirit from whom they had originally emanated.

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[17] See History, vol. ii., part v., Brahmanic Period, chap. iii.

[18] This sentiment is fully expressed by the Kshatriyas who were present at the Swayamvara of Draupadí, when they saw that Arjuna wore the garb of a Bráhman. See *ante*, p. 35. In the Buddhist code of Mánu, the Bráhmans rank below the Kshatriyas.

Character of the revolution which established Brahmanism.

It may now be possible to apprehend the nature of that religious revolution which was agitating the Hindú mind from a remote antiquity. The higher order of sages were becoming famous throughout the land for their transcendental wisdom, their severe austerities, their mystic sacrifices, and their profound contemplations. Many of them were perhaps little better than fanatics or madmen, who showed their indifference to pain by the practice of self-torture, and their indifference to shame by appearing in public without a shred of clothing. But sages and fanatics were alike regarded by the credulous multitude with superstitious awe. Some were worshipped as divine beings. Others, again, were supposed to have acquired such vast supernatural powers by the force of their penances and austerities, that they could compel even the gods to fulfil their behests. Meantime the bulk of the Bráhmans, the ordinary priests of every-day life, continued to worship the old gods as a means of livelihood; but at the same time they professed Brahmanical ideas and teachings as a means of acquiring respect, and exercising a more powerful influence over the masses. They appear to have encouraged the belief that no acts of merit were equal to sacrifices and almsgivings; but at the same time they were supposed to perform penances, to engage in the contemplation of the supreme spirit, and to exercise supernatural powers. Thus the idea of goodness and kindness became obscured by the darkness of superstition. The religion of the heart was stifled under a ritualism, which was as devoid of moral meaning as the indulgences granted in the Middle Ages. Sacrifices ceased to be a festive offering of meat and wine to the gods. Almsgiving was no longer a spontaneous offering to the priests of deity. Both rites were converted into religious merits; in other words, into atonements for sin by which the conscience was silenced whilst the heart remained untouched. The wicked expected to escape from the just penalty of their crimes by the slaughter of hecatombs of victims to the deities, and the presentation of costly gifts to the Bráhmans. The doctrine of vicarious sacrifices and merits crowned the whole system. The most heinous offences were supposed to be wiped away by the sacrifices and penances which were performed by a priest or preceptor in behalf of a cruel or depraved offender. Under such circumstances it is not surprising that the Bráhmans eventually acquired an ascendancy which destroyed the political life of every Indian nationality, and rendered the introduction of a foreign power a necessity to the people at large.

The part played by the Brahmanical community in the various revolutions of India, —religious, political, and social,—will abundantly appear in subsequent chapters. Before, however, opening up these new vistas in Indian history, it may be as well to glance at that ideal life, which had been prescribed by the Bráhman sages, and which has been recognized from an unknown antiquity, although it is rarely carried out except in theory. It may be summed up in a few words. The Bráhmans were a hereditary caste, appointed by the god Brahma for the worship of deity. They dwelt in separate communities, sometimes in hermitages, and at other times in streets or villages of their own. They subsisted on such simple fare as grain, vegetables, and fruit; regarding milk, butter, and curds as their choicest delicacies. Their whole time was occupied as far as might be with religious worship, such as sacrifice, prayer, penance, contemplation, and sacred studies; and every secular action of their lives, from the cradle to the burning ground, from the moment of rising in the morning till the moment of retiring to rest at night, was governed by some precept of purity or worship. Thus cleaning the teeth and rinsing the mouth were performed every morning, equally with the worship of the gods, according to a strict and minute set of rules; and every meal was accompanied by an offering or sacrifice to deity. Such a life could only be faithfully carried out under conditions of the strictest celibacy. But the Bráhmans were a hereditary caste. It was consequently the duty of every Bráhman to become a husband and father, in order that he might leave representatives to carry on the work of religious worship.

Four stages in the ideal life of a Bráhman: The student. The householder. The hermit. The devotee.

The whole existence of a Bráhman was thus mapped out into the four periods of youth, manhood, middle age, and old age; and the mode of life suitable to each period is elaborately laid down by the Bráhmanical lawgiver Manu.[19] During the first period a young Bráhman lived in the house of a preceptor of his own caste, and was taught all the learning, ceremonial, and moral and religious duties of the Bráhmans; and in return for this instruction and maintenance he rendered menial services, such as cutting wood, bringing water, or preparing the daily sacrifices. On reaching the second period the Bráhman left his preceptor, and commenced life as a householder. A wife was given to him, and he was formally presented with a cow. He now, if possible, drew his subsistence from endowed land, and received alms and offerings; but he was to avoid the habit of begging, lest by taking too many gifts the divine light should fade away from his soul. The Bráhman householder might also engage in trade and money lending, but he was not to follow any pursuit which was incompatible with his sacred calling, or engage in any service which was beneath his hereditary dignity. The most appropriate employment for a Bráhman householder was that of a priest and preceptor, who devoted his whole time to daily worship, and imparting sacred knowledge to his pupils or disciples. The third period, or middle age, was of an entirely different character. Hitherto the Bráhman may be assumed to have lived like a good man, doing his duty to his family, and setting a righteous example to his neighbours. But he would now think of preparing himself for a higher and holier state of existence. For this end he would throw off all family cares and anxieties; he would seek some secluded hermitage in the jungle, and there subsist on fruits and roots. Thus he would lead a life of celibacy and self-mortification until he had overcome all earthly appetites and desires. Finally, when he was freed from all sensations or emotions of joy or pain, he would enter the fourth period of life, and devote his whole time as a Sannyási to the contemplation of the divine spirit, so that after death his soul might escape from the trammels of material existence and become absorbed in Brahma.

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[19] See History, vol. i., part v., Brahmanic Period, chap. x.

Evils of a hereditary priesthood.

The religious life of the Bráhmans, notwithstanding its selfish isolation from other castes, is not without its attractions. But they formed a hereditary caste, and there is perhaps no institution more demoralizing to a religion than a hereditary priesthood. It excludes the men, who are otherwise fitted by character, tastes, and religious enthusiasm, from pursuing a sacred calling; and it admits a large number in whom the religious instinct is very weak, and the passion for wealth or power is very strong. The result of a hereditary priesthood in India is that there are but few Bráhmans who faithfully lead the ideal life prescribed by the ancient sages. They are generally pharisaically strict in the practice of all outward observances, through pride of caste, and fear of incurring disrespect; but otherwise they degenerate into mercenaries. In the social life of the Hindú drama, which belongs to a later period, they appear as parasites, jesters, men of the world, and political intriguers; and beyond their claims on the score of birth, they possess none of the virtues or attributes which are fondly ascribed to the ideal Bráhman of old.

Connection of Sati with the Bráhmans.

The organization of the Bráhmans into an ecclesiastical hierarchy belongs to a comparatively late period of their history, and will consequently be treated in a subsequent chapter. But there is one remarkable institution associated with their religion, which may be traced back to a very remote age, when the dogma of the transmigrations of the soul was as yet unknown. This was Satí, popularly known as Suttee, or the practice of burning the living widow with the body of her deceased husband.

Origin of the rite of Sati, or Suttee.

The slaughter of a wife or concubine at the obsequies of a deceased husband seems to have been a Scythian custom. It was an outgrowth of a belief in ghosts. The dead man was supposed to require the society of a favourite wife or concubine in the world of shades.[20] The Aryans appear to have had no such custom. After the great battle between the Pándavas and Kauravas, the dead bodies of the slain were burnt on funeral piles, but none of the widows were burnt with them. Again, none of the numerous women of Maháraja Dasaratha were put to death at his funeral obsequies. If a man died childless, his widow was expected to bear a son to the nearest kinsman; but otherwise the widows of a Raja continued to live in the royal residence under the protection of his successor.

The Scythic and the Aryan usage.

The original distinction between the Scythic and Aryan usage is thus obvious. The Scythians buried their dead; the Aryans burned them. The Scythians slaughtered a living female to enable her to accompany the dead man; the Aryans placed the widows in charge of the new head of the family. Both usages found expression among the Rajpoots. The dead man was burnt according to the Aryan fashion; but the living widow was burnt with him in order that she might accompany her husband to the world of spirits.

Scythian Satí modified by Aryan culture and worship.

The rite of Satí, as practised by the Rajpoots, may thus be described as a Scythian usage modified by Aryan culture. The bodies, dead and living, were no longer buried, but burned. The female was no longer slaughtered as an unwilling victim to the selfish sensuality of a barbarian. On the contrary, she was the widow of a high-souled Rajpoot; the reflex of his chivalrous devotion; prepared to perish with him in order that she might accompany her deceased lord to a heaven of felicity.[21] The Scythian Satí was further modified by the Aryan worship of fire and the sun. Agni, or fire, was the purifying deity. She was not only the domestic goddess of the household, but the divine messenger that carried the sacrifice to the gods; the purifying flame that bore away the widow and her lord to the mansions of the sun. In this manner the horrible rite, so revolting to civilization and humanity, was imbued with an element of the religion of the affections. It elevated the helpless concubine into a self-sacrificing heroine; the distracted widow into a joyful and triumphant bride. The future of the bereaved woman was no longer a vista of shame and sorrow. She ascended the pile as the chariot of fire which was to carry her away to the arms of her glorified bridegroom in the realms of bliss.[22]

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[20] See Herodotus, iv. 71. The same idea finds expression in an episode of the Mahá Bhárata. See History, vol. i., part ii., Mahá Bhárata, chap. ix. The question of whether the Scythians were of Aryan origin need not be discussed here. See Rawlinson's Herodotus, Book IV., Appendix, Essay II., Ethnography of European Scyths.

Spread of the rite over Raj-

Such was the rite which the Rajpoot and the poot and Brahmanical India.

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[21] Amongst the Thracians, the widows of the deceased man were said to dispute amongst themselves as to who was the best beloved, and consequently the best entitled to accompany her husband (Herodotus, v. 3). The same idea finds expression in an imaginary conversation between the widows of Pandu, which is apparently a later addition. See History, vol. i., part ii., Mahá Bhárata, chap. i.

[22] The earliest notices of Satí amongst the Hindús are to be found in the Greek accounts of the expedition of Alexander in the fourth century before the Christian era. (See *infra*, chap. iv., Greek and Roman India.) The rite is there said to have been adopted as a check upon the women, who occasionally put a husband to death for the sake of a younger lover. (Strabo, India, sect. 30.) The Greek story may have been based upon authentic tradition. In the age of Aryan or Rajpoot conquest, a captive princess often became the unwilling wife of her conqueror; and under such circumstances might be tempted to revenge the affront by poison or the dagger.

Brahman carried to nearly every quarter of India. It was the expression of the highest conjugal affection, combined with the lowest state of female degradation. The unfortunate widow had no way of escape from a joyless life of servitude, excepting by the most horrible of sacrifices. The honour of the family depended upon the heroism of the woman; and the widow was too often condemned to the pain of martyrdom when the heroism was altogether wanting. The victim was stupified with drugs, and adorned as a burnt offering. She was led by the Bráhmans to the pile from which flight was impossible. The timber was set on fire by the nearest kinsman, and often by her own son, amidst the deafening noise of drums, and the cries of an excited throng. But in the present day humanity may draw a veil over the scene. Under British rule the Satí has become a thing of the past; and within another generation its memory will be blotted out for ever.[23]

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[23] It will be unnecessary in the present day to dwell upon the horrors of the Satí; further details respecting it will, however, appear hereafter in the progress of the history. But the following verses by a poet of Peninsula India are supposed to express the feelings of the son whilst firing the funeral pile of his living parent, and furnish a powerful illustration of the inhumanity of the practice. Strange to say, although the dogma of the metempsychosis finds no expression in the rite itself, it is yet introduced in the verses. The description of the funeral ceremony, apart from the Satí, corresponds with the burning of Mahárája Dasaratha. See *ante*, page 49.

"Extracts from the song of Pattanatta Pillei, as he performed the funeral rites for his mother.

"1. In what future birth shall I see HER, who for ten moons, burdened, bore me; and when she heard the word SON, lovingly took me up in her rosy hands and fed me from her golden breast?

"2. Shall I kindle the flame to consume HER, who for three hundred days of weariness and longing, morn and evening imploring Siva's grace, was borne down by me a burden?

"3. Shall I place HER on the pile and kindle it,—HER, who in the cradle, on her bosom, on her shoulder, caressed me, fanned me, singing soothing lullabies?

"4. Shall I put the rice into that mouth, my mother's, with which she was wont to call me her honey, nectar, her only wealth, her boy?

"5. Shall I heap up rice on the head of HER, and place the firebrand with unflinching hand and steady eye; who softly raised me, pressed her face to mine, and called me oft her son?

"6. Sorrow for my mother kindles the fire, deep within, and I too have kindled the fire! See, it burns! it burns!

"7. It burns! It burns to ashes—Alas!—the hand which soothed me, and reared me, and led me so tenderly that its touch would not have frightened away the timid bird!

"8. Is she ashes now? Hath she come already to thy feet, O Siva? Hath she, evermore gazing on thee, rejoicing, forgotten me, her son?

"9. She was erewhile! She walked in the way! She was here but yesterday! To day burned, become ashes! Come all, unlamenting, sprinkle milk, ALL IS IN SIVA'S POWER!"

Translated by the Rev. G. U. Pope. See Dubois' description of the people of India, p. 221, foot-note. Madras, 1862.

CHAPTER III.

LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF GÓTAMA BUDDHA.

B.C. 623—543.

Failure of Brahmanism.

THE rise of Buddhism opens up an entirely new era in the history of religious development in India. The dogma of the transmigrations of the soul had spent its force in vain. It had not eradicated the worship of the gods, nor broken down the caste system, nor overthrown the spiritual domination of the Bráhmans. It had found some expression in the Brahmanism of the sages, but that also had proved a failure. Wherever such Brahmanism exercised any real influence it had tended to check the play of the affections by introducing a ritualism and asceticism which had no moral meaning for the masses. It had stripped the primitive religions of all the associations which endeared them to mortals, and reduced them to a creed, which, had it been universally accepted, would have ignored the old gods of man and the universe, and stifled all the yearnings and aspirations of common humanity. It was consequently doomed to stiffen into lifeless forms; to leave the vast populations of India hopelessly sunk in a childish superstition; and thus to await the inevitable revolution which was to restore the religion of humanity to the world.

Religious quiescence succeeded by revolt.

Such phases of quiescence are by no means unfrequent in the history of religious development. In reality the currents of spiritual thought are ever flowing and ever intermingling; but sometimes one or other may seem to stagnate for awhile, and harden into a material creed and formula which will last for generations. Finality, however, is impossible. The hardening is only on the surface. Beneath the upper strata of outward rites and observances, the elements of faith and worship, new and old, are seething like burning lava, until at last they assume a spiritual life, and burst through the crust of conventional belief, and create what the world calls a reformation or revolution. Sometimes the new movement is the revolt of humanity against an effete superstition, proclaimed by an earnest and self-denying apostle. But not unfrequently it is the re-action of the religious sentiment against a common-place humanity; the rehabilitation of the old gods and old worship in new and more spiritual forms, in order to arouse the world from a selfish and materialistic torpor. A type of either revolution is to be found in the history of ancient India. The advent of Gótama Buddha was the revolt of humanity against the superstition of the Bráhman priest and asceticism of the Bráhman sage. The Brahmanical revival was the rehabilitation of the old gods against the lifeless indifference of the Buddhist monk, and the general growth of luxury and ease.

The revolt of Buddhism against Brahmanism is only to be appreciated by those who are familiar with the results of both systems. The India of the present day presents many of the characteristics which must have distinguished ancient India prior

Results of Brahmanism on the people of India.

to the advent of Gótama Buddha. It is a land of deities, temples, and priests, which inspire a melancholy bordering on despair. The whole Indian continent is dotted with little sanctuaries, which appear like the sepulchres of defunct gods, whose grotesque and distorted effigies are to be seen within; and fathers and mothers bow down to these idols, praise them, propitiate them with gifts and offerings, and invoke them for help and prosperity. Again, there are temples of more colossal dimensions, with pyramidal towers or cone-shaped domes covered with sculptures, and surrounded by walls, court-yards, and roofed passages. But all are of the same sepulchral character. Some are the receptacles of archaic gods, who are arrayed in jewels and tinsel; but even these deities are little better than the gaudy mummies of a primeval age. The women alone seem to be fervent worshippers, for the men have begun to groan beneath the oppression of idolatry and Brahmanism. Indeed the rapacity of the temple priests is unbounded, whilst their culture is beneath contempt. They celebrate their temple festivals like children playing with dolls. They carry the gods in procession, or induce the gaping crowd to drag them along in huge idol cars; but they cannot evoke those joyous outpourings of adoration or thanksgiving, which indicate the presence of religious feeling in the hearts of the worshippers. The excited mob cry aloud "victory" and "glory," as though their gods had won great battles. The Bráhmans chant their mechanical laudations, amidst the deafening noise of drums and tom-toms. But beyond a passing effervescence there is rarely any real enthusiasm in such demonstrations. Yet the Hindús are essentially a religious people. They tell their beads and repeat their prayers. The poor are always ready with their simple offerings to the gods and their gifts to the priests. The rich will exhaust their means in constructing temples, tanks, wells, resting-places for travellers, and bathing steps on the banks of rivers; or in feasting a crowd of mendicant Bráhmans and presenting them with clothes and money. But their religious life, so far as it finds expression, is one of inflated ostentation, accompanied by settled gloom. Whether on pilgrimage to sacred shrines, or gathered together in hundreds of thousands at the great religious fairs, or sacrificing to the village gods with all the paraphernalia of flags and garlands, the people of India seem on most occasions to take their pleasures with sadness of heart. By the favour of the gods they may hope to obtain heaven; but by the anger of the gods they may be condemned to the torments of hell. They give apparent vent to great rejoicings on such occasions as a marriage ceremony or the birth of a son; but in their inmost hearts they are lamenting over a lavish expenditure forced upon them by the tyranny of custom, which reduces them to poverty for the rest of their days. They are virtuous and contented, but their aspirations are stifled by priestly repression, and their contentment is little better than a helpless resignation to their destiny. Their family affections are as strong as elsewhere, but from the cradle to the burning ground they are hemmed around with caste rules, religious observances, and Brahmanical exactions. The women are kept in seclusion and dependence. The son is married whilst yet a boy, and brings his wife to reside in the family. The daughter is given away whilst yet a girl, and condemned to live under the eye of a mother-in-law; and if her husband dies, she is doomed to perpetual widowhood. Thus amidst much outward placidity, dissensions and jealousies are frequently burning in the household. Too often the mother will not eat, the daughter-in-law is in an agony of tears, one female will not speak, another will not move, and husbands and fathers are looking on in despair.

Results of Buddhism on the people of Burma.

But Buddhism, as it once flourished in India, and as it still flourishes in Burma, has exercised a very different influence upon its millions of followers. It is a religion not of fear and sorrow, but of hope and joy. It is a creed which turns on the dogma of the metempsychosis in its simplest form; that goodness in the present life will ensure happiness in the next life.[1] It is thus a faith without gods, without priests, properly so-called, and without sacrifices, penances, or supplications to deity.[2] Yet its votaries are joyous and light-hearted, and generally good and benevolent. Their pagodas are airy structures without an element of melancholy or gloom. Their worship is an expression of reverential devotion towards their great apostle, whose career on earth was one of self-sacrifice for the deliverance of the human race from the miseries of existence. Their days of festival are characterized by open-handed hospitality and spontaneous expressions of real rejoicing. There are provisions for all who care to eat, sweet liquors for all who care to drink, and a profuse prodigality of flowers and perfumes. They have communities of holy men, who are distinguished from the laity by their yellow dress, and their closely-shaven and uncovered heads. They are sometimes called priests, but the term is a misnomer, for they have no duties to fulfil in connection with the pagoda, and no rites to perform at births, deaths, or marriages, or at any of the various incidents of family life, which bear the slightest correspondence to those which are performed by the Bráhmans. Indeed the holy men amongst the Buddhists are not priests, but monks, residing in the seclusion of their monasteries, and practically engaged in the education of the young. Many are also supposed to be pursuing sacred studies, or promulgating the religion of goodness and loving-kindness. Their maintenance is in no way felt as a burden upon the people. They are universally treated with a sincere respect and kindly consideration, which the Bráhman cannot always command. They may not beg, they may not even receive money; but they are abundantly supplied with all the necessaries of life by the voluntary contributions of the masses. Wherever there is a good work to be performed, whether in the name of religion or of benevolence, the Buddhist laity are always ready to contribute to the utmost of their means, and even to make over their cherished jewels and ornaments, if needs be. They have no caste distinctions. They can mingle with the utmost freedom amongst Europeans, as well as their own countrymen of every degree, without the slightest fear of impurity or breach of rule. Their wives and daughters are not shut up as prisoners in the inner apartments, but are free as air to take their pleasure on all occasions of merry-making and festival; and often they assume an independent position in the family and household, and gain a livelihood for themselves or superintend the affairs of husbands or fathers. Their affections are not pent up in little hot-beds of despotism as in Hindú households, but are developed by social intercourse into free and healthy play. Courting time is an institution of the country. On any evening that a damsel is desirous of receiving company, she places her lamp in her window, and puts fresh flowers in her hair, and takes her seat upon a mat. Meantime the young men of the village array themselves in their best, and pay a round of visits to the houses where they see that a lamp is burning. In this manner attachments are formed; and instead of arbitrary unions between boys and girls, there are marriages of affection between young women and young men, in which neither parents nor priests have voice or concern.

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[1] This definition of modern Buddhism is only applicable to the masses of the laity and not to the monks. It will be seen hereafter that there was as broad a distinction between the religion of the Buddhist monks and that of the Buddhist laity, as there was between the popular superstitions of the Hindú populations and the metaphysical speculations of the Bráhman sages.

[2] The statements in the text are sufficiently accurate, but yet open to question. In theory Buddhism does deny the existence of deity, and hence in the bitterness of controversy Buddhists are often denounced as atheists. Perhaps Buddhist monks deserve the epithet; but they live in an abstract world of their own, apart from all humanity. It is, however, impossible for the Buddhist laity, who live as husbands and fathers in the world of humanity, to deny deity; because all such men must be practically conscious of the existence of an unseen ruler, as God or providence, who presides over the concerns of life and carries on the government of the world; and the dogmas of merits and demerits, of destiny or inexorable law, cannot eradicate a belief which has become an instinct in humanity. Consequently Buddhism does recognize the existence of deity, and instinctively supplicates the assistance of divine beings, after a fashion that will be indicated hereafter.

Cradle of Buddhism in eastern Hindustan.

The cradle of Buddhism, however, was not in Burma, but in India. It did not originate in the Punjab, or land of Vedic Rishis; nor in western Hindustan, or land of the Bráhmans; but in the region further to the eastward, corresponding to

Oude and Behar, where, however, the Brahmanism of the sages had already penetrated, and was apparently taking deep root. The surrounding population may have included poetical Aryans worshipping the deified elements of the universe; but the masses seem to have adopted a religion which was based on the mysteries of death and reproduction; and they were largely influenced by a lower order of religious teachers known as Yogis, who combined a gloomy fanaticism with mystic rites and painful austerities. The higher phases of religious thought were becoming more and more abstract from humanity; and meantime luxury and sensuality were prevailing in all the cities. Such an anomaly is by no means rare in the progress of civilization. Brahmanism in its more spiritual form was doubtless only a reaction from the general corruption of the materialistic religion. Voluptuaries, surfeited with pleasure, turned to asceticism for relief. But such Brahmanism could only have imparted consolation to the few, and could never have satisfied the aspirations of common humanity; and thus a large portion of the community were prepared to accept the religion of Gótama Buddha, which was based upon the affections, and the affections alone.

Geography of Buddhist India during the life of Gótama.

The teaching of Gótama Buddha was confined to eastern Hindustan, and chiefly to that region which lay between Prayága at the junction of the Ganges and Jumna, and Gour at the divergence of the Hooghly and Ganges.[3] On the north, this area was bounded by the Himalayas; and on the south by an extension of the line of the Nerbudda river in an easterly direction along the edge of the jungle of Gondwana. The scene of Gótama's life and labours was thus an irregular square, which was divided amongst four kingdoms. In the northern half were the kingdoms of Kosala or Oude, and Mithila or Tirhoot; in the southern half were the kingdoms of Varanasi or Benares, and Magadha or Behar.[4] Lower Bengal, or the country eastward of Magadha, was wholly unknown, or only noticed by the name of Vanga. In the time of Buddha, neither of these four kingdoms exercised the authority of a lord-paramount or suzerain; but at a subsequent period it will be seen that the Rajas of Magadha established an imperial sway over the greater part of India.

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[3] Gótama is said to have penetrated to the Nága kingdom of the Dekhan, and even to have visited Ceylon and Burma, but these accounts appear to be all mythical. He, however, seems to have visited the Kosambi country, which General

Descent of Gótama from the Sákya Rajas of Kapila.

The origin of Gótama is still somewhat obscure. According to the legend of his life he was descended from a long line of ancestors of the Súrya-vansa, or children of the sun, who reigned as Chakra-varttas, or lords-paramount of India, from time immemorial. But a tradition has been preserved in the legend, which disposes of these high pretensions. The father of Gótama was Raja of Kapila; his mother was a princess of the house of Koli. Kapila was a mere off-shoot of the royal house of Kosala, or Oude; whilst Koli was a similar offshoot of the royal house

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Cunningham refers to the lower Doab, immediately to the west of Prayága or Allahabad.

[4] The political geography of Hindustan can only be indicated in the most general terms. Wars and revolutions seem to have been the normal condition of the ancient governments, and to have continually led to large territorial changes, such as the subversion of old kingdoms and foundation of new states, which no geographer can follow with any degree of accuracy. In the time of Gótama, the great kingdom of Oude or Kosala certainly included that of Benares; whilst Mithila was probably included in that of Vaisali, which was situated immediately to the north of Magadha, and was ultimately conquered by Magadha.

of Varanasi, or Benares. These two little principalities were situated in the northern part of Oude, on opposite sides of the river Rohini; but every trace of their sites has passed away, and the names of Kapila, Koli, and the river Rohini are unknown to modern geography.[5]

The tradition of the origin of the two settlements may be related as follows:—

Tradition of the origin of Kapila and Koli.

"In days of old there was a famous Raja of Kosala, named Ikswáku; and he had four sons and five daughters. When he was old he married a young damsel, and she bore him a son; and he so loved her that he made her son the heir-apparent to the Raj, to the exclusion of all the elder brethren. Then the four elder brethren departed out of their father's house, and took their five sisters with them; and they journeyed towards the north until they came to the river Rohini. And they founded a settlement there, and named it Kapila; and they set aside their elder sister Priyá to be queen-mother, and took their other sisters to be their wives.[6] And they had many sons and many daughters; and their sons were henceforth known as the Sákya princes.[7]

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[5] Fa-hian visited Kapila in the fifth century A.D. and found it a vast solitude. Travels, chap. xxii. Hiouen-Thsang's account is much the same.

[6] Professor Weber of Berlin has already pointed out the connection between this legend and that of the exile of Ráma.—Weber on the Rámáyana, translated by Boyd. Bombay, 1873.

[7] A myth has been introduced into the original legend to soften the horror with which such incestuous marriages were subsequently regarded. A sage, named Kapila, is said to have been dwelling in the neighbourhood, and to have directed the brethren to marry their sisters, on the condition that they took half-sisters only, that is, daughters of their father, but not of their respective mothers. The Singhalese version of the legend betrays the fact that they were all children of one mother, named Hatthá. (Mahawanso Tíká, quoted by Turnour, Introd. p. xxxv.; Hardy's Manual of Buddhism, p. 130.) Professor Wilson was of opinion that the city of Kapila, which was destined to be the birthplace of Gótama, was only called so in after-years because Buddhism was borrowed from the Sankhya system of philo-

"After this Priyá was afflicted with leprosy, and her brothers took her to the other side of the river Rohini; and she dwelt there and took up her abode in a cave.

"Meantime a Raja of Benares, named Ráma, was in like manner afflicted with leprosy; and he abandoned his throne to his son, and went into the jungle where Priyá was dwelling, and took up his abode in the hollow of a koli tree; and the leaves and bark of that tree cured him of his leprosy. One day he heard the roaring of a tiger, and the screaming of a woman; and he went to the spot, and saw that the tiger had fled, and that Priyá was half dead with terror. So he brought Priyá to his hiding-place in the Koli tree, and cured her of her leprosy; and she became his wife and bore many sons, and they were henceforth known as the Koli princes.

"When the Koli princes were grown they desired to marry the daughters of the Sákya princes of Kapila; but the Sákya princes refused them.[8] Now the custom was for the damsels of Kapila to go down to the river Rohini to bathe; and the Koli princes met them there, and led them away, and made them their wives.[9] Then the princes of Kapila became reconciled to the princes of Koli; and

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sophy which was taught by Kapila. But Buddhism is the natural development of Indian culture generally. See Professor Max Müller's remarks on this subject. Chips from a German Workshop, vol. i. Art. Buddhism.

[8] According to the legend the Sákya princes refused to give their daughters in marriage to the Koli princes, because the latter had been born in the hollow of a tree. Here, again, a mythic interpretation has been inserted to conceal a disagreeable truth. The real reason for the refusal probably lay in the leprosy of the parents of the princes.

[9] This tradition resembles the story told by Herodotus of the establishment of marriage relations between the young men of Scythia and the Amazonian damsels. Herod. iv. 110—117.

from that day the family of Koli intermarried with the Sákya family of Kapila."

Incestuous marriages of the Sákya princes.

This tradition is a valuable relic of antiquity. The marriages of the Sákyas to their sisters cannot be accepted as an isolated fact, but was an established usage like the polyandry of the old Vedic Aryan colonists. To this day it is practised by the Kshatriya kings and princes of upper Burma. It was, however, regarded with the utmost detestation by Brahmanical law; and it may be inferred that during the later antagonisms between Brahmanism and Buddhism the reproach was not forgotten. In the present day the insinuation of such a crime has been converted into one of the foulest terms of abuse in all Bengal.[10]

Birth of Gótama, B.C. 623.

Gótama, of the family of Sákyas, is commonly supposed to have been born B.C. 623.[11] His father Suddhodana was Raja of Kapila, and had married two sisters of the house of Koli. Mayá, the elder, gave birth to Gótama, and died seven days afterwards. Prajapatí, the younger, gave birth to a son named Nanda, who occupies an important place in later Buddhist history.[12]

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[10] The sons of the king of Burma marry their half-sisters. The first wife of the king is generally either a sister or a half-sister. The eldest sister is compelled to lead a life of celibacy so long as her parents are alive, in order that she may be treated as queen-mother. A similar practice prevailed amongst the ancient kings of Persia, who were probably descended from a cognate stock. See Bigandet's Life of Gaudama, p. 11, *note*. The practice of marriages between such close relations is said to have been followed to insure purity of blood. The line of inheritance in the Malabar country is not to a son, whose paternity might be doubtful, but to the son of a sister. Strange to say, a similar incestuous union appears in the legend of Krishna. See History, vol. i., part ii., Máha Bhárata, chap. v.

[11] The date of the birth of Gótama is very uncertain. The question is fully discussed in Max Müller's History of Sanskrit Literature, pages 263 — 273. According to the Singhalese era his death took place in the year 543 B.C., after a mortal career of eighty years. This date is accepted by Professor Lassen; but it will be shown hereafter that it may be easily shifted to an earlier or later period.

Religious melancholy of Gótama.

Gótama was of a serious turn of mind from his childhood. Like most men who are destined to become religious teachers, he appears to have been at once thoughtful, melancholy, and imbued with deep sympathies for suffering humanity. Indeed the pain and affliction to which all mankind are more or less subject, seems to have been one of the earliest ideas that dawned upon man. Herodotus has described a Thracian tribe, who mourned when a child was born, and rejoiced when an individual died; and this idea seems to have been early impressed upon the mind of Gótama, but further developed by the dogma of the endless transmigrations of the soul, which he learnt from the Bráhmans. Thus elements of religious thought were possibly working in his soul respecting the hard and inexorable destiny of humanity, that were calculated to fill him with religious despair. As the boy grew older he became so sad and serious that his father grew alarmed lest he should abandon his high position, and become a religious recluse, like the Bráhman sages who sat and dreamed away their lives under the trees.

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[12] There is no difficulty in dealing with the main incidents in the life of Gótama. There is a general conformity in all the traditions that have been preserved that possess any claim to authenticity; whether in Thibet to the northward of the Himalayan mountains; or in the island of Ceylon to the south of Peninsular India; or in Burma to the east of the Bay of Bengal. There are, however, considerable differences in the quality and quantity of the supernatural details, which have been introduced by pious monks and miracle-mongers of a later date; but they have been mostly passed over in the present work as devoid of all historical value. Their general character will be found indicated at the conclusion of the present chapter. They are narrated in Bishop Bigandet's Life or Legend of Gaudama, based on Burmese authorities, Rangoon, 1866; and in Hardy's Manual of Buddhism, based on Singhalese authorities. See also the works of Burnouf and St Hilaire.

It has been remarked by some writers, and by Christian missionaries amongst the number, that many details in the life of Gótama Buddha coincide with incidents in the life of Christ. This point will be noticed hereafter in dealing with the life of Gótama as a whole.

Marriage of Gótama.

When Gótama was sixteen years of age, Raja Suddhodana thought that marriage might divert the young man's thoughts into a new channel. Accordingly a negotiation was opened with the Raja of Koli for the hand of his daughter Yasodhará. But the Raja of Koli objected to give his daughter to such a degenerate Kshatriya. Gótama, however, soon proved that he had by no means neglected the accomplishments of his race, for he distanced every competitor in the use of weapons, and thus obtained the fair prize. The marriage was duly celebrated, and for some time Gótama was happy in the love of his beautiful bride. Meantime the kinsmen and retainers of the two royal houses of Kapila and Koli sent their daughters to the palace to amuse the young prince with their various accomplishments; and it may be inferred that at this period of his life he plunged into every kind of pleasure, until at last he was oppressed with satiety, and his old melancholy began to return.[13]

It is difficult to say how long Gótama pursued a

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[13] The sensuality indicated in the text is almost incredible. It is, however, quite in accordance with Kshatriya usages. A custom somewhat similar has always prevailed amongst the Kshatriya sovereigns of Burma, varying of course with the character or temperament of the reigning king. Bhodau-pra, who reigned A.D. 1781—1819 over the whole Burman empire, from the Bay of Bengal to the Chinese frontier, was unbounded in his zenana indulgences. Every governor and feudatory was expected to send his fairest daughter or sister to serve in the palace as an attendant, or Royal Virgin. If any such damsel obtained the favour of the king, she was elevated to the position of an inferior queen, and provided with a separate apartment and slaves for her own use. On the one hand, she was expected to promote the interests of her family at court; on the other, she was supposed to keep the king informed of all that was going on in the family of her father or brother.

The three terrors—old age, disease, and death.

career of pleasure.[14] During the latter part of it he is said to have successively beheld three different objects, which inspired him with a deep sense of the miseries of existence. These objects were an aged man, a diseased man, and a dead man. This legend need not be interpreted literally. Probably it is a parable intended to convey by three striking figures a conception of the evils which are the common lot of humanity,—old age, disease, and death. The sight of each of these objects awoke a fresh train of thought in the mind of the young prince; and when he had seen them all, he exclaimed in the anguish of his soul:—"Youth, health, and life itself are but transitory dreams; they lead to age and disease, and they terminate in death and corruption." Reflections such as these have driven some men into a melancholy madness, which has ended in suicide; but suicide to a believer in endless transmigrations is merely a change from one existence to another. At this juncture Gótama saw a religious mendicant; a man who had renounced all pleasures, all desires, and all affections; who walked along with dignified tranquillity, and looked only upon the ground. The sight of this mendicant enabled Gótama to perceive a way of escape from the world, and all its delusions and sorrows. He too would abstract his mind from all passion and desire, until he should be finally delivered from the prison of endless transmigrations.[15]

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[14] According to the legend Gótama was married at the age of sixteen, and did not abandon his home and family until he was twenty-nine. This would give him thirteen years of domestic happiness. But, as will be seen hereafter, Gótama abandoned his family the very day his only child was born; and it may therefore be inferred that practically his married life was brought to a close after a year or two.

[15] This episode, as regards the appearance of a religious mendicant, requires some explanation. It evidently applies to the ordinary mendicant monk of Bud-

The way of deliverance.

This idea, that by adopting the life of a mendicant, he could finally escape from the miseries of existence, is said to have gladdened the heart of the young prince. According to the legend, each of the three preceding objects had struck him with sadness, and on each occasion he had turned back gloomily to his own apartments. But the sight of the calm and subdued mendicant seemed to lift a weight from his soul. He saw a way of deliverance from all his cares, and instead of returning to the palace, he drove on to the royal gardens without the city, and passed the day in pleasure. In the evening the musicians prepared to accompany him in procession to the palace, and he had just taken his seat in the chariot, when a messenger from his father brought the joyful tidings that his wife Yasodhará had given birth to a son. The multitude filled the air with acclamations, but he himself began to ponder upon the new tie which seemed to bind him to the world. He reached the palace weary with the events of the day, and lay upon his couch. A bevy of damsels danced and played before him according to their wont, but he was

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dhism, who, as will be described hereafter, was seeking to escape from the miseries of successive existences or transmigrations into the state of annihilation known as Nirvána. It would thus seem to imply that Buddhist mendicant monks existed in India long before the advent of Gótama Buddha. This conclusion is highly probable; although religious mendicancy is common to other oriental religions, to Brahmanism and Islam, as well as to Buddhism.

But the reputation of Gótama Buddha, as the great apostle of humanity, does not rest so much upon his being the founder of a monastic order; for that order may have existed in some form or other for ages before he was born; but upon his being the teacher of the religion of the heart, which springs from the affections, in which the happiness of mankind, both in this life and in the life hereafter, is made to depend upon his goodness or benevolence. This fact has been ignored by monastic writers, who sought only to abstract themselves from the affections in order to attain Nirvána. A familiarity with the Buddhist laity will correct any non-apprehension on this point, especially when the edicts of Priyadarsi are taken into consideration. See *infra*, chap. 5.

steeled against all their attractions, and soon fell into a heavy slumber.

The flight from the palace.

At midnight Gótama awoke. The lamps were still burning. The damsels were sleeping about in ungainly attitudes, open-mouthed, or gnashing their teeth. He rose up in utter disgust, and ordered his horse to be made ready. He peeped into his wife's chamber, and saw his infant son resting upon her bosom. He turned away lest his resolution should fail him, and descended the palace stairs, mounted his horse, and rode off with only a single attendant until he reached a small stream. Here he made over his horse to his attendant, together with his royal robes and ornaments, and sent them back to Kapila; whilst he himself put on the yellow garb of a religious mendicant, and prepared for the new life which he was about to enter.

Contrast between Gótama and Mohammed.

The religious culture of Gótama thus presents a marked contrast to that of Mohammed. One was intellectual and spiritual; the other was sentimental and intensely human. The benevolence of Gótama took the form of a passionate yearning to deliver mankind from its hopeless imprisonment in an eternity of transmigrations;[16] and according to the Brahmanical teaching of the time, a life of celibacy and mortification was the first and all-essential step in this direction. The pleasures of female society were supposed to be the most powerful obstacles to religious progress; the deadliest of all the sins that enthralled the soul in the universe of the passions.

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[16] There is some obscurity about this early yearning of Gótama to deliver mankind from the miseries of existence. It is undoubtedly the belief of modern Buddhism, and finds expression in every part of the legend of the life of Gótama. But it is plain from the sequel that for some years Gótama only sought to work out his own deliverance.

The culture of Mohammed was altogether different. His conception of God was that of deified humanity; merciful and compassionate to all who worshipped him, but wrathful and revengeful towards all those who disobeyed his laws or followed after other gods. The idea that the love of women was injurious to the soul never crossed the mind of the old Arab prophet. On the contrary, the sympathy and companionship of women were the mainstay of his religion, and thus the Koran and polygamy went on hand in hand.

Gótama commences his career as a mendicant.

The legend of the life of Gótama is not very clear or connected, but there is little difficulty in tracing the several stages of his religious development. At first he abandoned himself to a kind of pious ecstasy, which may have been little more than a sense of freedom. He then made his way to Rajagriha, the old metropolis of Magadha, which was situated to the south of the Ganges, not far from the modern town of Behar, and about two hundred miles from the supposed site of Kapila. He thus placed a distance of several days' journey between his father's Raj and his new career; probably from a natural reluctance to commence the life of a religious mendicant in a country where he would be at once recognized. At Rajagriha, some rumours of his royal birth may have accompanied him; and henceforth he seems to have lost his name of Gótama, and was chiefly known as Sákya Muni, or the sage of the family of Sákyas. His life of mendicancy met with a check at the commencement. At Rajagriha he carried his alms bowl from house to house for the first time, and collected in this manner a quantity of broken victuals; but when he sat down to his meal the food appeared so coarse that he loathed the sight of it. It was a moment of hard trial to the religious enthusiast, but at length he overcame his disgust, and finished his meal with cheerfulness of soul. According to the legend, he was encouraged by the reflection that the food was at least clean and pure; and it is not impossible that the pangs of hunger contributed to this pious frame of mind.[17]

Brahmanical culture of Gótama.

Sákya Muni had thus escaped from the bondage of the flesh; but the first exultations of freedom were doubtless followed by a reaction. The mere fact that he had ceased to be a prince, and had assumed the life of a beggar, could not have satisfied his religious aspirations; and he would feel the necessity for acquiring knowledge from some one more advanced in spiritual experience. At that time the only religious teachers in Hindustan were apparently Bráhman sages, or preceptors; and Sákya Muni was destined to undergo a severe course of Brahmanical training, before he finally appeared before the world as a "Buddha," or enlightener of men. The conditions of such a religious life in India have been characterized by extreme simplicity from time immemorial. A would-be disciple waited upon some distinguished sage, served him in every way, collected food and alms for him, and in return received a course of religious instruction which continued day by day. It will be seen hereafter that the foundations of Brahmanism and Buddhism are almost

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[17] There is one difficulty about this period of Gótama's career. He had apparently no means by which to support himself during the lengthy journey from Kapila to Rajagriha. It appears, however, from a later incident in his life, that he carried away four golden cups or vases, which belonged to him as crown prince, and which were ultimately demanded by his son Rahula.

Distinction between the Brahmanism of the sages and the Buddhism of the monks.

the same. As regards faith, both were reactions from the primitive religions, which were more or less associated with feasting. As regards practice, both were reactions from the unbounded sensual indulgences, which form such a prominent feature in ancient civilization. Again, both had accepted the dogma of the transmigrations of the soul; and both expressed the consciousness of pain and misery, the weariness of existence, the impatience of humanity, which culminated in a longing to escape from the sphere of animal being. But the Brahmanism of the sages and the Buddhism of the monks represented two different stages of development. The Brahmanism of the sages, as already seen, retained the worship of deity although in an abstract form. It resolved all the gods of the universe into the supreme spirit. It taught that escape from the chain of transmigrations consisted in the return of the individual soul to Bráhma; there to be absorbed in the supreme spirit, or to enter upon an individual existence in the heaven of the supreme spirit; and in either case to enjoy ineffable but indefinable felicity. Finally, it declared that this deliverance of the soul could only be effected by worship and austerities, and by contemplation of the supreme spirit in its varied manifestations, until the soul was prepared as it were to form a part of the supreme spirit. The Buddhism of the monks had advanced much further. It was a far more emphatic expression of the revolt against the old theology; so much so as to amount to a revolt against even the higher forms of Brahmanism. It rejected all conception of supreme deity. It taught that worship and austerities, prayers and sacrifices, were utterly without avail; that they were powerless to modify the inexorable laws of the universe as expressed in the dogma of transmigrations. It laid down that broad distinction between the general mass of the community and the monastic order, between the so-called ignorant and the so-called wise, which is the essence of Buddhism. The ignorant, who still clung to the world, and its pleasures, and who had no aspiration beyond being born again in a happier birth, were assured that they could attain that object by the practice of goodness and benevolence in thought, word, and deed. But the wise, who had been imbued with a sense of the evils and unrealities of life, and who were supposed to aspire to a deliverance from the bonds of the flesh, were taught that there was no way of escape from the hopeless prison of existence except by a life of celibacy and mendicancy, in which they could contemplate all the conditions of animal life, all the instincts and necessities of nature, until they loathed and abominated the whole. By this course of discipline the Buddhist monk might sever every tie which bound the soul to the universe of being, so that after death it would sink into that everlasting quiescence or annihilation which is known as Nirvána.

But these distinctions between Brahmanism and Buddhism were chiefly of a metaphysical character. Had they continued to be confined within the narrow area of philosophical speculation, they would perhaps have never found expression in actual antagonism; and indeed, as far as can be gathered from authentic evidence, there was no violent antagonism between Brahmanism and Buddhism until some

Antagonism on the question of caste.

centuries after the advent of Gótama. The question of deity or no deity, worship or no worship, austerities or no austerities, would have proved of little moment, excepting so far as either side might win over the popular support by appealing to the prevailing sentiment. But there was one point mooted by Buddhism, which was calculated to revolutionize the whole social system of the Hindús; and which in fact did ultimately succeed in dividing the Hindú world into two hostile camps. This question was the righteousness or otherwise of caste; a question which is quite as important in the present day as it was two thousand years ago.

Characteristics of the caste system in India.

The caste system of India is not based upon an exclusive descent as involving a difference of rank and culture, but upon an exclusive descent as involving purity of blood. In the old materialistic religion which prevailed so largely in the ancient world, and was closely associated with sexual ideas, the maintenance of purity of blood was regarded as a sacred duty. The individual had no existence independent of the family. Male or female, the individual was but a link in the life of the family; and any intermixture of blood would be followed by the separation of the impure branch from the parent stem. In a word, caste was the religion of the sexes, and as such exists in India to this day. The dogma of the transmigrations of the soul was, however, calculated to cut at the very root of the caste system. If a man could be born a Bráhman in this life and a Súdra in the next, the maintenance of caste purity was practically of small importance. But the Bráhmans never accepted the dogma of the metempsychosis in its entirety. Their position, as the hereditary priesthood of India, precluded them from abdicating their claims to form the highest caste, just as it precluded them from ignoring the worship of the gods. They were in fact unprepared to accept such a self-denying ordinance; and consequently relegated the dogma of the metempsychosis to the area of philosophic speculation. But the founder or founders of Buddhism occupied a very different position. They had accepted the dogma in all its fulness, and with all its conditions. Moreover, the first principles of Buddhism rendered the abnegation of caste even more essential than the abnegation of worship or deity. No man could fulfil his duty to his fellow-creatures, so long as he was hemmed around with caste distinctions; and no monk could attain Nirvána, or even enter upon monastic vows, so long as a single caste consideration disturbed the serenity of his soul.[18]

Gótama as a disciple, a sage, and a preceptor.

The religious culture of Sákya Muni indicates the three several stages of his Brahmanical career,—as a disciple, a sage, and a preceptor,—through which he passed in succession prior to becoming the apostle of Buddhism.[19] In the character of a disciple he waited upon two Bráhman sages who dwelt in a village near the city of Rajagriha; and learned the science of Samadhi, or perfect abstraction of the soul in the contemplation of the supreme spirit. This was accomplished by five steps or stages, known as dhyanas, which are, however, almost too metaphysical to be quite intelligible. Thus in the first step the soul discovers the good and perfect; in other words, the supreme spirit. In the second step it contemplates the discovery. In the third step it relishes the discovery. In the fourth step it feasts on the discovery. In the fifth step it is satiated with the discovery and falls into quiescence.[20] But it was obviously impossible that such a metaphysical religion could satisfy the aspirations of Sákya Muni. It might, to use the language of Buddhism, have enabled him to enter Nirvána and obtain quiescence for his soul; but it would not enable him to become a Buddha or enlightener.

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[18] The birth of Gótama as a Kshatriya and a prince of royal blood, invested him with extraordinary powers in subverting the caste system. Had he been born in an inferior caste, his attempts to establish an equality would have been derided as springing from base-born insolence. It is curious to note that Mohammed held a similar position when he maintained the dogma that all men were equal in the eyes of God. The Prophet belonged to the tribe of Koreish, the hereditary guardians of the Kaaba, the blue blood of the old Arab aristocracy; and it was doubtless this fact that excited the deadly enmity of the Koreish but secured the ultimate triumph of the Koran.

[19] The legendary account of the religious culture of Sákya Muni might possibly be treated as an allegory. According to the later myths Sákya Muni was prepared to enter Nirvána before he was born as Gótama; but out of pure benevolence towards suffering humanity, he deferred his entrance to Nirvána in order that he might become a Buddha. Consequently there was no necessity for his undergoing the Brahmanical training indicated in the text. The legendary

Abstraction of the soul.

Accordingly Sákya Muni left the two Bráhmans, and threw off the character of a disciple and assumed that of a sage. He went into the solitude of the jungle, which is known to this day as the jungle of Buddha Gaya. Here he began to practise austerities, and especially to pursue the science of Prádhana, or contemplation of external nature. Prádhana is another metaphysical method for acquiring knowledge, which seems to have been developed by the

Contemplation and austerities.

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account, however, is valuable, even if it only serves as an illustration of religious discipline in the early age of theological speculation.

[20] The power of analysis in metaphysics, which was exercised by the Bráhman sages of antiquity, might possibly be admired if it were not practically useless. In the Vishnu Purana six stages or dhyanas are mentioned, viz. bodily restraint, position, breathing, exclusion of external ideas, apprehension of internal ideas, and retention of internal ideas. The dhyanas in the text appear to have been modified by Buddhism. Compare Bigandet, p. 65 and *note*.

Brahmanical study of the Veda. It prevailed largely during the age of Brahmanism, but is fast dying out in the present age of materialism. Some idea of the Buddhist form of Prádhana is, however, necessary in order to trace the intellectual process by which the apostle of Buddhism is supposed to have proved that existence is all a fleeting show; at the best a mockery and delusion subject to infirmity, pain, and death. An enthusiastic inquirer, such as Sákya Muni is conceived to have been, would contemplate one of the elements such as fire. He abstracted his mind from every object excepting fire; he devoted all his attention to fire; he analyzed its several parts; he considered the causes that kept it together; he discovered that those causes were accidental; and he concluded that fire has but a fictitious and ephemeral existence. He applied the same method to the other elements, and then to every object within his range of experience, and finally arrived at the conclusion that nothing has a real existence, that everything is incessantly changing, and that the wise man can feel no attachment to such illusions and deceptions. In like manner he finds that his own body is incessantly changing; that it is distinct from self or soul; and he despises it accordingly, and begins to long for Nirvána.[21]

Failure of the Brahmanical system.

Whilst Sákya Muni was thus engaged, his profound meditations and austerities attracted general attention, and, to use the language of the legend, his fame was noised abroad like the booming of a great bell. Five Bráhmans in particular visited his retreat, and became his disciples after the old Brahmanical fashion. But neither contemplations nor austerities would enable Sákya Muni to become a Buddha. As a last experiment he entered on a lengthened fast of such severity that his golden complexion faded into blackness, and he fainted away like a dead man. He now felt that such an ordeal unfitted rather than prepared him for becoming Buddha; and accordingly he broke his fast and recovered his strength. From that day he was averse to all penances and austerities; but his five disciples were disappointed at his weakness, and went away to the deer forest in the neighbourhood of Benares.

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[21] Bigandet, p. 66, *note*.

Development of the affections.

But whilst Sákya Muni is said to have been inspired by deep sympathies for suffering humanity, it is evident that his religion up to this point was drawn from the intellect rather than from the affections. Indeed his mental abstractions were calculated to deaden his feelings. Yet it is obvious that unless he could move the hearts of men, he never could win their faith. The language of fanaticism, which teaches that book knowledge is of no avail unless the heart is changed, involves one of the profoundest truths in religious teaching. It was by direct appeals to the affections that the more famous teachers have stirred the hearts of millions; and by such appeals even the crude ravings that compose the Koran have been endowed with vitality and power. Whilst Sákya Muni was pondering over Nirvána, a little incident is recorded, which seems to have brought him back to the world of common humanity. He was sitting beneath a tree when a young woman appeared before him and worshipped him, and presented him with a vessel of rice and milk. It seems that she had previously prayed to the deity of the tree for a good husband and a little son;[22] both her requests had been granted, and she now expressed her gratitude by this simple offering to the sage, whom she mistook for the sylvan deity.[23] The legend is silent as to the effect of this act of natural piety upon the heart of Gótama. It only states the fact that his soul was subsequently illuminated by a pious joy which convinced him that he was about to become Buddha. In other words the metaphysical dreamer was transformed into one of the greatest moral teachers that the world has ever seen. Sympathy with humanity soon appears to have awakened other emotions of humanity; for about this period Sákya Muni is said to have been tempted by a spirit of evil named Mara, with visions of imperial power, of female loveliness, of death and corruption.[24] But he overcame all temptation, and in the moment of triumph he knew that he had become a Buddha to enlighten an ignorant and miserable world. This event is said in the legend to have been accompanied by an earthquake and many miracles, which will be noticed hereafter.

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[22] It is impossible to say whether this deity of the tree was a serpent or a genius; but it may possibly have been referred to both characters; and it will be seen from the text that it was supposed to be able to assume a human form.

[23] The story of the woman who mistook Sákya Muni for the deity of the tree, is surrounded with difficulty. According to the monastic legend Sákya Muni was touched by the incident, and subsequently became a Buddha, to teach man to abstract himself from all humanity in order to attain Nirvána. Here there is an absolute contradiction between the story of the woman and the transformation of Sákya Muni. The story of the woman was associated with the popular worship of the old gods. It was also associated with a manifestation of gratitude or kindness on the part of a happy wife and mother. Yet according to the monastic legend Sákya Muni became Buddha in order to enforce the so-called truths that worship was unavailing, and that the object of the wise should be to crush out all the affections.

[24] This Mara bears a strong resemblance to the Satan of holy writ, the tempter in the wilderness; but in all probability he is only a personification of what was passing through Sákya Muni's own thoughts.

Twofold character of the law: discipline and religion. Religion for the many.

The law which Gótama Buddha was about to preach was of a twofold character—namely, religion and discipline.[25] The religion was for the masses, the so-called ignorant, who had no longing for Nirvána, and who only desired a happier life in the next state of existence. This religion was based upon the law of universal benevolence or kindness. It found expression in five great commandments—namely, against killing, stealing, adultery, intoxication, and lying. Each of these commandments was ultimately amplified into numerous precepts, intended to guard not only against the commission of sin, but against the inclination or temptation to sin. Every thought, word, and deed was converted into a merit and demerit, and rewarded or punished according to the inexorable rule of endless transmigrations. Against this law there was no appeal. The Bráhmans had taught that sacrifices and penances were exalted merits that would atone for breaches of the moral law. But Buddhism denied that the moral law of the universe could be set aside by prayers or worship. The practice of universal goodness or kindness, in thought, word, and deed, was the only way by which man could raise himself to a higher state of existence. Thus, Buddhism not only taught a pure morality, but enforced it by obligations which were intelligible to all.[26]

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[25] The sacred books of the Buddhists lay down a marked distinction between "religion" or dharma, and "discipline" or vináya. Perhaps dharma might be best understood as morality or virtue; but inasmuch as it is associated with a belief in a future state of transmigrations, it might with more propriety be termed religion. Again, vináya might be best understood by the word religion; but it is not associated with any ideas of deity, worship, or a future state of rewards or punishments, but only with the rules of discipline by which the monks may attain Nirvána. Accordingly it will perhaps be best to retain the equivalents to the Buddhist terms which are specified in the text, namely, religion or dharma, and discipline or vináya.

Existences of deities and demons, heavens and hells.

But whilst Buddhism ignored the gods, it did not actually deny their existence. On the contrary, it admitted that deities might exist, and that each might have a heaven of its own; and that demons might exist in like manner in a variety of hells.[27] But neither deity nor demon, neither heaven nor hell, could in any way effect the deliverance of the soul from the trammels and miseries of existence. Deities and demons, the denizens of heaven and the denizens of hell, were alike subject to the law of transmigrations; and the various heavens and hells were merely a part of the moral system of the universe, where transcendant merits might be sufficiently rewarded, and the greatest crimes be sufficiently punished. Then when the period of reward or punishment came to a close, the soul returned to the universe of animal being, and again entered on its weary way through an endless chain of transmigrations.[23]

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[26] The five commandments, forcible as they are from their extreme simplicity, furnish but a very imperfect idea of popular Buddhism. They are only an abstract form of the civil law, and not the full expression of the religion of universal loving-kindness and benevolence, which is the true dharma. The duties of the affections will be further brought under review in chapter v. They are repeatedly set forth in the edicts of Asoka, and comprise the relative duties of servants and masters, children and parents, householders towards kinsfolk and neighbours, the laity towards priests and monks, and the human race towards the whole range of animal being. These duties of the affections formed perhaps a prominent part in the early religion of Buddha; whilst monastic teaching, in its more metaphysical form, was the growth of a later age.

[27] The recognition of the existence of deity or deities by the Buddhist laity has already been noticed in a previous note. See *ante*, page 97. The following incident, which occurred during a voyage undertaken by the author in upper Burma in 1870, will serve to illustrate the popular ideas on the subject. At a town beyond the British frontier a Burman official came on board to pay his respects, and brought a singing woman with him, who performed some pieces. She sang one song in the character of a princess who was in love with a prince, but the parents had raised a difficulty against the marriage. She represented how in former times, when people were so afflicted with disappointment in love, the Brahmas (gods) came down to console and help them, and she asked how it was that they did not do so still. "Their conduct," she sang, "was cruel. Surely they must be fast asleep; or if they were so short-sighted as not to observe the troubles in this world, the people would present them with diamond magnifying-glasses."

Monasticism for the few.

But in addition to this religion for the ignorant there was a discipline for the wise; for those who were prepared to devote themselves to a religious life of celibacy, mendicancy, and strict discipline; who cared not to continue in the vortex of transmigrations, but sought only to purify their souls from all desire for the hollow and delusive pleasures of the world, and to escape from all the pains and miseries of existence, into the everlasting rest of Nirvána. To effect this deliverance it was necessary to renounce five things, namely,—children, wife, goods, life, and self; in order that the soul might be free from every stain of affection or passion. In the language of Buddhism there were four paths to Nirvána, namely,—perfect faith, perfect thought, perfect speech, and perfect conduct; and the only true wisdom was to walk in these paths. The basis of the monastic discipline of Buddha is thus to be found in four great truths, which are renowned throughout the world of Buddhism as the law of the wheel, namely :—

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[23] This Buddhist idea of an intermediate state between mortal life and Nirvána, finds a similar expression in later Brahmanism, and may possibly have originated the Roman Catholic conception of purgatory. Indeed the similarities between many of the rites and usages of Buddhism and Roman Catholic Christianity are very remarkable. The monasticism of the Buddhists, the shaven heads of the monks, the sacerdotal robes, the use of great bells, the canopy or umbrella over monks and pagodas, the worship of relics and images, and the lavish employment of flowers, incense, and lighted tapers,—all seem to suggest the idea that at some early period of the Christian era, many of the characteristics of Buddhism, for which no authority can be found in holy writ, had found their way into the Christian Church, and received the sanction of the Holy See. Strange to say the monks also practise confession, and after certain penances obtain absolution; but these rites are now strictly confined to the Buddhist monasteries. In the reign of Asoka a general confession or expiation was carried out every five years. See *infra*, chap. v.

Four truths comprising the law of the wheel.

1st. Pain and misery are universal throughout the whole area of animated being.

2nd. Pain and misery are caused by the affections, desires, and passions, which are nothing more than cravings after illusions created by the imagination.

3rd. Pain and misery can be destroyed by removing the cause ; in other words, by delivering the soul from the domination of the affections, desires, and passions.

4th. Deliverance for the soul can only be effected by entering the four paths which lead to Nirvána, namely,—perfect faith, perfect thought, perfect word, and perfect deed.

The four truths, which comprise the law of the wheel, can be expressed in every variety of language. They simply indicate the existence of pain and misery, the cause of pain and misery, the removal of the cause, and the method of removal.

Profound sorrow of Sákya Muni over the horrors of existence.

When Sákya Muni first realized the fact of his mission, he is said to have surveyed the whole universe to its minutest detail, and then to have exclaimed :—"All is misery and affliction! All beings are imprisoned in the vortex of endless existences ; and all are carried to and fro by the craving for what is illusive and unreal : I must therefore preach the four great truths which are the law of the wheel; for by that law men can purify their souls from every desire, and finally attain the everlasting repose of Nirvána." Then, when the greatness of his mission filled his soul, he burst forth into that hymn of joy, which is still ringing throughout

Hymn of joy.

the world of monastic Buddhism:—"I have endured the pain of endless transmigrations, but now I have discovered the cause of all: I have extinguished every affection, desire, and passion: I can emancipate myself from the bondage of life, and enter into the eternal rest of Nirvána."[29] But Sákya Muni was not as yet to enter Nirvána. Out of his pure benevolence he continued to exist upon the world in order that he might become a Buddha and preach the law. At that time men had lost all knowledge of the law;[30] and ignorance, or what he called ignorance, was the greatest enemy that he had to encounter. "Ignorance," he said, "is the cause of all pain and misery; because it deludes the imagination by its illusions, excites the passions, and perpetuates existences; and this ignorance can only be dispelled by the four great truths, which are the law of the wheel."

Head-quarters of Sákya Muni at Benares.

When Sákya Muni became a Buddha he was sitting under a tree named Bodhi, or the tree of wisdom,[31] in the country which is still known as

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[29] Buddha's Hymn of Joy has been thus rendered by Professor Max Müller:—"Without ceasing shall [? have] I run through a course of many births, looking for the maker of this tabernacle,—and painful is birth again and again. But now, maker of the tabernacle, thou hast been seen; thou shalt not make up this tabernacle again. All thy rafters are broken, thy ridge-pole is sundered; the mind, being sundered, has attained to the extinction of all desires."

By the maker of the tabernacle, Buddha probably personified the passions; or rather the ignorance which deluded the imagination, and excited the passions. This view is further illustrated by the Buddhist legend of the origin of man, which bears a strange resemblance to the Biblical narrative of the creation and fall. The world was originally peopled with celestial beings who fed on celestial food, which sustained life without entailing the necessities of nature. In an evil hour these beings began to eat rice, which subjected them to those necessities, and led to the distinction of the sexes and the outbreak of the passions.

[30] It is a favourite idea in Buddhism to imagine that at vast intervals of time a Buddha appears to revive the knowledge of the law by which man can attain Nirvána. Thus the religious mind looks back upon an eternity of existences of men and animals, Buddhas and worlds.

[31] The religious ideas associated with trees are somewhat varied. Originally the spirit or genius of the tree may have been worshipped as an abstract deity.

Buddha Gaya. His first act was to proceed to Benares, to convince the five Brahmanical disciples whom he had lost when he ceased his austerities, that penances were of no avail in teaching religion, but that a knowledge of the four paths was essential. In this attempt he was successful. Then he began to preach to the world in general, and his success in bringing over converts to his views forms one of the strangest phenomena in Indian history. It is not, however, difficult to indicate the causes of his popularity. The conflict between the religion of the Vedic Aryans, and that of the non-Vedic people, had thrown religious thought into chaos. On the one hand, Bráhman preceptors of different schools were imparting new metaphysical meanings to the worship of the Vedic deities. On the other hand, fanatical Yogis were calling in the aid of the passions to enforce practices too revolting for description. A third set of teachers, known as Tirthakaras, appear to have had a still larger following. To some extent their teaching was not unlike that of Sákya Muni. They denied the existence of a supreme spirit, and asserted that the only true deities were those men who like themselves had overcome every desire. But they also denied the existence of a future state, and thus cut away the roots of a moral system. They sat under wooden sheds, and exhibited themselves to their disciples in a state of nudity, under the morbid sentiment that they were

Success of Sákya Muni.

Then, again, snakes often live in trees, and the deity of the tree was identified in the snake or Nága as a phallic symbol. This was probably the deity whom damsels propitiated to obtain husbands, and wives propitiated to obtain children. When the Indian sages preached beneath the trees, new ideas became blended with the ancient worship. In Buddhism there is the tree of wisdom, which possibly may bear a resemblance to the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

superior to all sense of shame. All these fanatics were more or less reverenced as saints, or holy men; and some were even worshipped as gods by the ignorant and superstitious masses.[32] The religious instinct of the people of India was thus being rapidly corrupted by knavery and mania; and many earnest inquirers after God and truth, must have been utterly bewildered by the religious antagonisms, and could scarcely have known what to worship or what to believe. Amidst this spiritual darkness the religion of Sákya Muni recommended itself to all by its simplicity and purity. It fell like rain from heaven, clearing up the moral atmosphere, and bringing all the affections of the heart into vigorous and healthy play. In mild but earnest strains he preached all the precepts of universal benevolence, which find expression in the five great commandments. He exhorted his hearers to shun the company of those false teachers who were ignorant of the law of the wheel, and to court only the society of the wise who had begun to walk in the four paths. He taught them to be respectful, kind, humble, contented, grateful, and patient; remembering always that their afflictions in this life were the just punishment of their misdeeds in former lives, and that by good works in this life they might ensure happiness in the next.[33]

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[32] A curious reference to the worship of these naked Tirthakaras, or "pure-livers," is to be found in the legend of Visakhá. See Bigandet, page 244; and Hardy's Manual, page 225. General Cunningham furnishes some information respecting their doctrines in his sketch of Sákya Muni. (See Bhilsa Topes, page 19.) The Indian worship of fanatics in a state of nudity is frequently noticed by old European travellers. See Purchas's Pilgrims, *passim*. Further notices will be found in the next chapter, which treats of Greek and Roman India. Such exhibitions have been generally suppressed since the establishment of British rule.

[33] See a celebrated sermon, said to have been delivered by Sákya Muni to a Nath or Vedic god. Bigandet, p. 115, *note*. The same sermon has been pre-

Distinction between the priesthood and the laity.

The converts to the new religion were naturally divided into two classes, who may be distinguished as the monastic order and the laity. The monastic order comprised all those men who were surfeited with pleasure, or were without hope or joy in the world, and who were earnestly striving after a religious life, and to observing monastic vows, and to following the strict rules of poverty and celibacy. The laity formed the general mass of the converts, who remained as they were; immersed in all the pursuits and pleasures of the world, but proving their faith in the new religion by entertaining Sákya Muni and his priests, and endeavouring to bring their thoughts, words, and deeds into conformity with his teaching. Both classes included individuals of strange experiences. Voluptuaries wearied with pleasure; free-booters awakened to a sense of their crimes; Bráhmans dissatisfied with their preceptors; Yogis disgusted with their own uncleanness;—all heard the Muni with gladness, and after due preparation accepted the monastic vows. The lay converts included men and women of every class and degree; powerful Rajas, enterprising merchants, the rich as well as the needy, the healthy as well as the afflicted. The women of course predominated; and maidens, wives, and widows are described as amongst the most fervent disciples of Sákya Muni. Stranger still, even the wealthy courtezans of the great cities eagerly listened to the words of the Muni, entertained both him and his priests with food at their own

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served by F. Sangermano. (Description of the Burman Empire, chap. xvi. Rome, 1833.) The sermon, however, is a strange intermingling of two totally different currents of religious thought, namely: the religion of the laity under which men were to cultivate all the duties of the affections; and the discipline of the monastic order in which they were to abstract themselves from all the affections.

houses, and took refuge in the three gems—Buddha, the Law, and the Assembly.[31] Vimbasara, Raja of Magadha, built one Vihára, or monastery, near his capital at Rajagriha, in the country still known as Buddha Gaya. A rich merchant of Kosala, named Anáthapindadu, built another Vihára at Srávastí, the frontier city between Kosala and Magadha in the neighbourhood of Benares. Another important Vihára was built in the deer forest near Benares. In a word, within a few years of the commencement of his public career, Sákya Muni appears to have fairly founded a religion, and established a regular organization for the strict maintenance of monastic rule in the Viháras, and further spread of the new faith throughout Hindustan.

Assembly composed, not of priests, but monks.

The collective community of monks were known by the general terms of assembly and priesthood. But the term "priest," which is borrowed from an age of sacrifice, is apt to mislead, and consequently has been generally avoided. The members of the assembly are not priests in either the ancient or modern sense of the word. They neither offer up sacrifice nor prayer. They celebrate no sacraments of any kind whatever. They take no part in the rites of marriage nor in those of funerals; for the idea of marriage is opposed to their own profession; whilst the burying or burning of a dead body has nothing to do with their religion. Again, they are called mendicants, but they are not so in the European sense of the word. It is contrary to their rule to ask for alms or accept money. They may receive voluntary offerings of cooked food, clothes, and all things necessary for a religious life, but that is all.[35] Originally they appear to have lived like other religious sages beneath the trees; but subsequently, as already seen, wealthy believers built monasteries or Viháras for their accommodation. Every morning the monks left their respective Viháras, and walked slowly through the neighbouring village, with their yellow robes folded around them, and looking neither to the right hand nor to the left. Sometimes they carried their own alms bowls; but generally the bowl is carried behind an elder by some younger disciple or probationer. From time immemorial a religious mendicancy seems to have been practised throughout the east, and regarded with reverence by the people at large. Amongst Buddhists, however, there is none of that clamouring for alms, which too often characterizes the Bráhmans. Profound faith in the doctrine of merits furnishes a sufficient stimulus to the pious layman. The poorest people are ever willing to give a portion of their food to the holy man, and thus daily add to that store of merits which was to ensure them a happier existence hereafter. Such was the old life of the Buddhist monk, and such it continues to be down to our own time.

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[31] In the Buddhist religion these three so-called gems are continually referred to. They are known as Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. They form the commencement of every Buddhist book, and are uttered on all occasions by both the priesthood and laity.

Monastic life.

When Sákya Muni had admitted sixty-one priests into his assembly, he appears to have carried on his missionary operations under a regular system. The centre of his teaching was fixed in the Vihára near Benares. Here during the rainy season, when travelling was difficult, if not impracticable, Sákya Muni

Missionary operations.

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[35] In Burma these priests are called Phoonghyes and Rahans. In other countries they are called Talapoins and Bikshus.

dwelt with his monks, and instructed them in the laws and precepts of his religion. When the dry weather returned he sent them abroad to teach what they had been taught, and to make new converts to the faith in the law. Originally, when a convert was anxious to enter the priesthood, he was taken to Sákya Muni, and admitted by him in his capacity of head or grand master of the assembly; but this procedure was found to entail so many fatiguing journeys, that it was relaxed in Sákya Muni's own lifetime, and the elder monks were empowered to admit all candidates for monastic vows. Sometimes Sákya Muni himself engaged in missionary work amongst the villages; but as a rule he generally proceeded from Benares to Rajagriha or some other great city, where he preached to the wealthier and more cultivated hearers, and only exhorted the rural populations on his way.[36]

Admission of monks into the assembly.

The admission of a convert into the priesthood is to this day one of the most striking ceremonies in the Buddhist religion. The neophyte is dressed in his gayest attire, and carried to the monastery in a procession of friends and relatives in festal array, accompanied by a band of musicians playing all the way. This is done in commemoration of the procession which accompanied Gótama, when he drove in his chariot from his garden to his palace on the evening before he entered upon his religious career. The moment the neophyte enters the doorway of the monastery his secular life is brought to a close. His hair and beard are shaved completely away. His fine clothes are taken off, and he is invested with the three yellow robes,—the shirt, the petticoat, and the mantle. He then prostrates himself before the elder priest who is about to admit him, and assumes the attitude of worship, and exclaims aloud three times:—"I adore Buddha, the Law, and the Assembly." Finally he takes the vows of poverty and celibacy, and henceforth conforms to monastic rule. Every young man is supposed to be admitted at least once into a monastery; it may be for a short time, as a matter of form, or for only a year or two to finish his education; or, if he has completed his twentieth year, it may be for life. But however this may be, so long as he wears a yellow robe, he is invested with a sacred character. A minor offence might be expiated by confession and penance; but for any of the capital sins, such as murder, theft, or unchastity, the vile apostate is expelled from the monastery, and regarded with general horror and detestation.[37]

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[36] The retirement of Sákya Muni with his monks during the rainy season is still commemorated by a festival, known as the Buddhist Lent, which commences with the full moon in the month of July and ends with the full moon in the month of October. A few of the more fervent monks live during this period in retirement, and occupy themselves with reading and meditation. But the masses chiefly celebrate it by flocking to the pagodas on the days of the new and full moon, and placing offerings of flowers and tapers before the images of Gótama, or Sákya Muni, and presenting an abundance of all the necessaries of life to the neighbouring monasteries.

But the monasticism of Buddha had its dark

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[37] Besides the five commandments forbidding murder, theft, unchastity, drunkenness, and lying, every monk was required to abstain from the five prohibited things, namely—1. Eating solid food after mid-day. 2. Dancing, singing, and music. 3. Flowers, perfumes, or unguents. 4. High or luxurious seats. 5. Accepting gold or silver.

The four capital sins are said to be murder, theft, unchastity, and spiritual pride. Practically the sin of spiritual pride is ignored.

It may here be added that the Buddhistic hierarchy consists of five grades, namely—1. The neophyte, under twenty. 2. The monk, or priest proper. 3. The head of a Vihára, corresponding perhaps to an abbot. 4. The head of all the Viháras in a district, corresponding perhaps to a bishop. 5. The head of all the Viháras in a province, corresponding to a primate.

Dark side of Buddhist monasticism.

side. It took away all the poetry of existence. It stripped life of every illusion, if illusion it be, which imparts a purity and dignity to the passions. It made war upon the religion of the heart. It sought to stifle all aspirations after God, by teaching that prayers and sacrifices were of no avail to suffering humanity. In like manner it sought to crush out the young affections by teaching that beauty and loveliness were mere delusions of the imagination to cover the defects and corruptions of humanity. The teaching of Sákya Muni thus often amounted to a disgusting cynicism; but this was chiefly confined to monastic discipline. Towards his priests he was stern and inexorable at any pining after the pleasures of the world; but amongst the laity he was equally tolerant in religion and morals, so long as there was no deviation from the law of kindness as expressed in the five commandments.

The main incidents in the life of Sákya Muni are chiefly valuable from the glimpses which they furnish of ancient Hindú life; but here and there are genuine touches of human nature. Thus he went with his disciples to his old home at Kapila, where he astonished the subjects of his father Suddhodana, and exasperated all his relatives, by going his morning rounds with the alms-bowl. He admitted his half-brother Nanda, and his own son Rahula, to the priesthood, and thus deprived his father of all heirs to the throne; but subsequently he was so touched with the affliction of the old Raja, that he passed a law forbidding for the future the admission of any man into the priesthood without the consent of his parents, under pain of

Consent of parents necessary to ordination.

excommunication.[38] Raja Suddhodana died shortly afterwards, but the circumstance is very obscurely related, and seems to have exercised no effect upon the career of the great teacher.

Sákya Muni was not exposed to much religious persecution during his lifetime. Bráhmans and Yogis were mostly indifferent to his preaching. The Tirthakaras alone exhibited any active hostility, and that was excited more by his success than his

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[38] The conversions of Nanda and Rahula are described at some length in the legend of the life of Gótama, but they are of such an apocryphal character that it may suffice to indicate the main points in a note. Nanda, the half-brother of Gótama, or Sákya Muni, had been appointed heir-apparent in his room. The day of installation arrived when the five ceremonies were to be performed. Water was to be poured upon his head; the royal ornament was to be placed upon his brow; the heralds were to proclaim him "Little Raja;" a separate palace was assigned him for a residence; and a fair young princess was given to him in marriage. Nanda had already taken his seat upon the throne when Sákya Muni entered the hall, and cried out:—"To know the Law of the Wheel, and to enter the four paths,—these are the greatest festival: Come down from your throne and follow me!" Nanda reluctantly obeyed this imperious demand, and followed Sákya Muni to the Vihára in the neighbouring garden, and was at once shaved and compelled to take the vows. The poor young bride saw him go, and called out to him to return; but he could not resist the strong will of his mentor, who seems to have been imbued with the spirit of a St Dunstan. Nanda subsequently pined for his bride, but is said to have been cured of his affection by one of those materialistic lessons, which emanate from the dark side of Buddhism. Bigandet, pp. 169, 177.

The conversion of Rahula, the son of Sákya Muni, seems to have referred to some political intrigue. When Sákya Muni first left his palace and became a religious mendicant, he is said to have carried away with him four golden cups or vases. After the conversion of Nanda, Rahula became heir-apparent. Accordingly Yasodhará, the mother of Rahula, sent the boy to Sákya Muni, and asked him to restore the four golden cups, as being a part of his inheritance, i. e. state insignia, and not personal property. Sákya Muni was evidently enraged at the demand, and replied that he would give him a better inheritance, and forthwith inducted him into the priesthood. Bigandet, p. 171.

This allusion to golden cups seems to betray the Scythic origin of the Sákya Rajas. Herodotus tells us (iv. 8—10) that every Scythian carried a golden cup in his belt; and it is a curious fact that to this day every Burman of any pretensions carries a golden cup with him as an emblem of dignity. The four golden cups mentioned in the Burmese version of the legend are described as golden mines in the Singhalese version. (See Hardy's Manual of Buddhism, p. 206.) Possibly they may have been the four golden gifts which Herodotus tells us were ever carefully guarded by the Scythian kings, and approached every year with great sacrifices. See Herod. iv. 5, 7.

Antagonism of the Terthakaras.

doctrine. Indeed, in the legend of his life there are but few traces of religious controversy. On one occasion Sákya Muni remarked that the Bráhmans, who taught the worship of deified spirits or existences, were ignorant of the way by which the soul might escape from existence. On another occasion the Tirthakaras remarked that they taught the way to Nirvána as well as Sákya Muni. But no discussion followed in either case. When, however, the Tirthakaras saw that the stream of charity and almsgiving was being diverted from themselves, and that wealthy supporters were deserting them and running after the new religion, they became naturally exasperated. They sought to detract from the reputation of Sákya Muni by suborning women to bring false charges against him; and although every accusation is said to have been refuted, the apostle of morality must have been exposed to considerable annoyance.

Dissensions in the assembly.

Sákya Muni appears to have suffered more severely from dissensions within his own assembly. During one rainy season a large number of his monks proved refractory on some question of discipline; and he was driven to such extremity that at last he departed out of the assembly, and lived by himself in the jungle. Ultimately the disaffected monks were starved into submission. The wealthy lay converts refused to support them any longer; and the rebels were thus compelled to sue for pardon, and make their peace with their old master. Later on a violent schism broke out which for a while seemed to divide his assembly into two hostile camps. But this incident belongs to the history of his declining years.

Another source of annoyance arose from the female portion of the community. Women are generally warmer in their affections than the sterner sex, and consequently are more ready to take an active part in religious movements. Accordingly they showed themselves devoted followers of Sákya Muni; but this involved a strange anomaly. The religion of Sákya Muni was only intended for men; and was directly antagonistic to women. A cry was raised in the city of Rajagriha, that the new religion had deprived hundreds of women of their husbands. The mourning of the bereaved wives was compared to the lowing of cows; and it was declared in oriental imagery that the city of Rajagriha, which was surrounded by five hills, had been converted into a cow pen. A similar mourning was said to have broken out in the cities of Kapila and Koli, where Raja Suddhodana had recently died, and a large number of princes and nobles had taken monastic vows.[39] Sákya Muni was sorely perplexed as to the best means of meeting the difficulty. The obvious course was to permit women to become nuns. But

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[39] According to the legend of the life of Gótama, a war was on the point of breaking out between the princes of Kapila and those of Koli. There had been originally a dispute about the water of the river Rohini, but the breach had been widened by insult. The men of Kapila abused those of Koli as being sons of lepers; whilst the men of Koli retorted that those of Kapila were the sons of pigs, who had married their sisters. (See legend of the origin of Kapila and Koli, *ante*, p. 102.) War was just about to commence, when Sákya Muni hastened to the spot, and brought the princes to their senses by asking if the blood of Rajas was to be spent on account of a little water. Sákya Muni is then said to have preached to both parties, and to have converted all the princes to his faith, and admitted them to the priesthood.

This incident appears somewhat apocryphal. It would seem, however, that these little principalities of Kapila and Koli were at this period pressed from the south by the large kingdom of Kosala, which in its turn was being pressed by the rising power of Magadha; and this fact, and other political disturbances following the death of Raja Suddhodana, may possibly have led to a large number of conversions.

Reluctant admission of nuns.

Sákya Muni had strong objections to a measure which might interfere with the discipline of his Viháras, or cause scandal to the order. At length he was compelled to yield. The ladies of Kapila and Koli were reluctantly permitted to become nuns; and Prajapatí, the widow of the deceased Raja Suddhodana, was appointed to be their lady superior.[40]

Political disturbances in Hindustan: breach in the royal house of Magadha.

During the declining years of the life of Sákya Muni, a great storm appears to have been gathering over central Hindustan. The two ruling powers at this period were Kosala and Magadha; known to modern geography as Oude and Behar. These kingdoms had been formerly engaged in intermittent wars for the possession of a border territory lying between the two, which was known as Srávastí, and was situated in the immediate neighbourhood of the famous city of Benares.[41] During the earlier part of the career of Sákya Muni the dispute was settled by intermarriage; Vimbasara, Raja of Magadha, married the sister of Prasa-najit, Raja of Kosala, and obtained Srávastí as dowry. Rut Raja Vimbasara was now growing old, and the court at Rajagriha was agitated by a fearful breach between the old Raja and his son Ajata-satru. The aged Raja was naturally jealous of his son and heir; whilst the young prince was eager to obtain possession of the kingdom. The quarrel between the father and the son was also widened by religious antagonism. Vimbasara had renounced the religion of the Bráhmans, and become an early convert to that of Sákya Muni. Accordingly Ajata-satru identified himself with the cause of the Bráhmans, who were naturally hostile to Raja Vimbasara.

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[40] A few solitary nuns are occasionally to be seen in Burma, and are to be known by their white gowns. But they are generally either misshapen or extremely ugly; and it seems incredible that in the present day at any rate they could ever cause the slightest scandal.

[41] General Cunningham identifies Srávastí with a locality far away on the north-east frontier of Oude (Ancient Geog. of India, vol. i. page 407 et seq). But Buddhist traditions distinctly refer to it as a border-territory between Kosala and Magadha situated in the neighbourhood of Benares. See Hardy's Manual, page 285; Bigandet, page 252.

Breach in the Buddhist assembly.

At this juncture a somewhat similar breach was created in the assembly of Sákya Muni. Devadatta, a brother of Sákya Muni's wife, had long been a monk; but he leaned to the practices of the Bráhmans, and formed the design of founding an independent assembly of his own. Accordingly, as Vimbasara had been the leading patron of Sákya Muni, Devadatta ingratiated himself with Ajatasatru; and by the aid of this prince he set up a Vihára of his own, where he was soon joined by numerous disciples.

Legend of Ajatasatru the parricide, and the apostate priest Devadatta.

An unholy compact was now formed between Devadatta, the schismatic monk, and Ajata-satru, the rebellious prince, which is only dimly indicated in the legend. The prince is said to have been advised by the monk to compass the death of his father; and this horrible parricide was accomplished under circumstances of extreme ferocity. The old Raja was thrown into confinement, and starved to death. Ajata-satru then ascended the throne of Magadha, but found himself exposed to enemies on every side. The popular feeling was strongly aroused against him, not only on account of his parricide, but also because he had espoused the cause of the recreant monk, Devadatta. In the first instance he had been induced by Devadatta to attempt the life of Sákya Muni; and had actually sent a body of archers for that purpose; but the archers refused to obey orders, which would have stained their hands with the blood of so holy a man. At last Ajata-satru appears to have been either terrified by his unpopularity, or suffering from the pangs of remorse; whilst at the same time he was probably sick of his advocacy of the cause of Devadatta against his religious master. Accordingly he sacrificed Devadatta, and made his peace with Sákya Muni. According to the legend Devadatta was transfixed in hell on bars of red-hot iron; but in all probability he was literally crucified by order of Ajata-satru.[42]

Whilst the kingdom was torn by internal commotion, it was exposed to the assault of its ancient enemy, the Raja of Kosala. Prasa-najit, whose sister had been married to the murdered Vimbasara, was naturally aroused at the violent death of his brother-in-law; and at once seized possession of the disputed territory of Srávastí. But the reconciliation of Ajata-satru to Sákya Muni was followed by so strong a revulsion of feeling in his favour, that he soon drove Prasa-najit out of Srávastí. Indeed from the day of reconciliation Ajata-satru commenced a career of victory, which enabled him to conquer all the neighbouring powers, and ultimately to annex the whole of Kosala and Vaisali to his old dominions.[43]

Empire established by Ajata-satru.

Sákya Muni might now perhaps have passed his declining years in pious tranquillity under the protection of this powerful Raja. The religion which

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[42] Crucifixion was until very lately the Burmese punishment for heresy. It has now, it is hoped, been brought to a conclusion through the spirited remonstrance of the British government.

[43] Bigandet's Life of Gaudama, pages 252, 361; Hardy's Manual, page 285.

Latter years of Sákya Muni.

he taught presented powerful attractions in an age of political unrest; and whilst the masses were consoled by the hope of a happier life in a future existence, many a ruined man was eager to bury his hopes and joys in the welcome seclusion of the Vihára, and ponder over the means by which he might sever every tie which bound him to this transitory existence. Moreover, Sákya Muni seems to have enjoyed not only the respect and veneration of many of his disciples, but the most ardent attachment; and for many years a faithful monk, named Ananda, whose memory is still revered throughout the world of Buddhism, had devoted his whole life to personal attendance upon his aged master. But an impatience of his strict monastic discipline and despotic rule seems to have been springing up in the hearts of many of his priests, and he was too often disturbed by cavilling and dissension. Then again, although verging on his eightieth year, and as eloquent as ever in declaiming upon the miseries of existence, he seems to have been reluctant to leave the world. This no doubt arose from the natural reluctance of the old man to die; a reluctance which is common to all humanity, and which neither religion nor philosophy can entirely overcome, until the mind is convinced that the end is inevitable. Possibly, however, Sákya Muni foresaw the strife and trouble which would follow his departure. His anxiety upon this point was indeed deeply touching. He said to his disciples:—"When I am gone, do not say that Buddha has departed from you; for so long as you keep my law, so long you will have Buddha with you."

At this period Sákya Muni lost two of his older

Death of two favourite disciples.

priests, whom he had always regarded with peculiar favour, because they had been originally Bráhmans, and had deserted their Brahmanical preceptor in order to embrace the three gems. One died peacefully in his old age; but the other was brutally murdered by assassins, who are said to have been hired by the Tirthakaras. The last event created much excitement amongst the disciples. They naturally asked what crime so good a priest had committed to justify such a horrible death. They were told in reply that in a former life he had taken his parents into the jungle, and left them to perish; and that his death in the present existence had been a fitting punishment for such an atrocious deed. Raja Ajata-satru exacted a terrible revenge, by ordering both the murderers and their instigators to be buried in the earth up to the waist, and then burnt alive. Sákya Muni however bitterly felt the loss; and it is said that his last public act was to order stupas, or memorial mounds, to be raised over the relics of the two elders; the one at the entrance to the Vihára near Srávastí, and the other at the entrance to the Vihára near Rajagriha.

Alleged origin of the commemoration of relics.

It is difficult to say whether this commemoration of relics was introduced by Sákya Muni, or originated in a later age. Either way it has formed for centuries an important element in the religion of Buddha, and is thus invested with a deep significance. Man must worship: it is an instinct of humanity. It is a healthy aspiration of the soul to seek out some ideal of goodness, beauty, or power, whom it may propitiate or adore. This aspiration Sákya Muni sought to stifle, by ignoring all deity. But he could not root it out of the human heart; and it accordingly found a vent in reverence for his own memory, and that of his more illustrious priests. Thus bits of bone, teeth, and other nameless relics are treasured up as memorials of Buddhist saints; and countless images of Sákya Muni are to be found of every size throughout the world of Buddhism, from tiny figures carried in the hand, to colossal statues of enormous height. This may be worship, but it is not idolatry. The images are not gods, but mere memorials of the great teacher and enlightener; and the reverence paid to them is but a development of that religion of the affections, without which devotion itself will soon harden into a cold and fossil creed.[44]

Death of Sákya Muni.

The narrative of the death of Sákya Muni, or, to use the language of Buddhism, the circumstances under which his soul entered Nirvána, are startling from their extreme simplicity. He was journeying through the country of Kosala, when a pious worshipper put a roast sucking-pig into his alms-bowl; and the old apostle is said to have partaken so freely of the rich food, that it brought on an internal complaint which proved fatal. He was taken very ill on the road, and a couch was prepared for him under a tree. There he passed a night of severe suffering, but continued to exhort his disciples to the last, and frequently repeated the fundamental principle of his religion that all existences are transitory. At early dawn his soul sunk into the eternal rest of Nirvána.

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[44] According to the legend of the life of Gótama, he is said to have himself originated this reverence for relics at an early period of his teaching, by giving eight of the hairs from his head to some merchants who had come from Burma. The merchants are said to have received these relics with becoming reverence, and to have built a pagoda over them, which is still famous throughout eastern Asia as the great Shwé-dagon pagoda at Rangoon. But the sceptic might urge that apostles rarely give away relics of themselves, and certainly not at the commencement of their career; and if Gótama was so thoroughly shaved, as he ought to have been by the rules of his order, he would have found insuperable difficulties in procuring the hairs.

Significance of the legend respecting the cause of death.

The death of Sákya Muni from eating too much roast pork has a deep significance. It is generally accepted as a literal fact; for although it seems to detract from the piety of the saint, the story is admitted by the Buddhists themselves. It certainly appears strange that Sákya Muni should have eaten flesh meat in direct opposition to his great commandment,—"Thou shalt not kill." But still this point is capable of explanation. All Kshatriyas are flesh eaters by instinct; and in the present day the Buddhists urge that the commandment is not a Brahmanical caste law against eating flesh meat, but a Buddhist law against putting any animal to death.[45] Accordingly, whilst the pious Buddhist will not kill, he will readily eat the flesh of an animal that has been slaughtered by another, or killed by an accident, or died a natural death. The disease also of which Sákya Muni died is strangely suggestive. At different periods of his life he was subject to internal complaints, and frequent mention is made of a doctor, named Jevaka, who cured his previous attacks, probably by administering opium. It is therefore not impossible that Sákya Muni derived his conception of Nirvána from the pleasurable repose produced by opium. In the present day, however, opium is treated as an intoxicating drug, and as such is forbidden to all Buddhists.

The events which followed the death of Sákya

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[45] It will be seen hereafter that both the story and the explanation are the probable invention of some flesh-loving monk, and were apparently interpolated for the sake of obtaining the highest authority for the indulgence.

Mythical account of the funeral ceremonies and distribution of relics.

Muni are apparently related with some exaggeration. The neighbouring princes are said to have hastened to the spot to mourn their loss, and assist at the obsequies of the great teacher. The body lay in state for seven days, and was then burnt with all the pomp and magnificence which attended the cremation of a Sákya Raja. After the ceremony was over, the relics were carefully collected, but different princes are said to have asserted rival claims to possession. An appeal to the sword was on the eve of being made, when a Bráhman, named Drona, settled the dispute by dividing the relics into eight shares, which were finally deposited in appropriate stupas in eight different cities.[46]

Unreal character of the legend.

The life of Gótama Buddha thus passes away into the world of legend. Indeed the entire narrative is surrounded in the original by a halo of unreal glory and mythical exaggeration, which are evidently the product of a later age of Buddhist monasticism. These supernatural data have been in a great measure excluded from the foregoing biography. Indeed for the most part they are un-

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[46] Without absolutely denying the credibility of all the details mentioned in the text, it is evident that some of them are open to question, especially the dispute about the relics, and their ultimate disposal. It is added in the legend of the life of Gótama, that about twenty years after his death, the famous Bráhman Kasyapa felt some alarm as regards the safety of the relics. He accordingly collected them from the several princes, and deposited them in a Vihára of brass, which he placed in a deep vault eighty cubits under-ground. At the same time he wrote out a prophecy, that after the lapse of two centuries, the vault would be opened by a king named Asóka; and he placed this prophecy in the Vihára together with the relics. The relics and the prophecy were in due course discovered by King Asóka after the lapse of two hundred years. (Bigandet, page 34 et seq.) A suspicion is thus excited that the prophecy, and perchance the relics also, are part of a pious fraud concocted in the lifetime of Asóka, or perhaps even later. Both Drona who distributed the relics, and Kasyapa who collected them and stowed them away, were Bráhman sages, whose existence is mythical. They are often mentioned in both the Mahá Bhárata and Rámáyana.

CHAPTER III.

meaning fables, throwing no light whatever upon the real life of the apostle, and introduced solely for the purpose of amusing the imagination of wonder-loving orientals. It will, however, be necessary to indicate their general character, in order that nothing may be wanting in the formation of a correct judgment of Buddhism and its founder.

Supernatural incidents.

According to these myths Sákya Muni was but one of a series of Buddhas, who have appeared in this present universe, but are yet separated from each other by vast intervals of time. Again, this universe is but one of a series of universes, each having its own system of Buddhas; the whole covering a period which defies all calculation, and may be best described as infinity. Then, again, Sákya Muni, in his individual capacity, passed through a great number of transmigrations prior to his becoming incarnate as the son of Mayá. He worked himself up through every class of the vegetable and animal kingdom, and through every grade of humanity, performing every virtue in each existence in the grand aspiration of finally becoming a Buddha. His transmigrations are reckoned at five hundred and fifty in number; and mythical narratives of each transmigration are to be found in Buddhist literature. They are supposed to prove his surpassing benevolence. At a very early period he is presumed to have reached such a pitch of piety that he might have escaped from the miseries of existence, and entered the eternal quiescence of Nirvána; but this termination of existence would have frustrated all his aspirations. His mighty aim, was to deliver, not merely himself, but the whole mass of suffering humanity, from the vortex of endless transmigrations. With this object he continued to endure all the pain of successive lives in order that he might attain to such a perfection of humanity as to become a Buddha, and teach and save an ignorant and miserable world. The life of Sákya Muni is thus the mere biography of his highest and last transmigration; although his spiritual existence is connected with all worlds and all time.

Introduction of deities and miracles.

Another class of myths represent Sákya Muni as a divine being rather than as a mortal teacher. He was not a deity, and he claimed no relation to deity. Indeed in his teaching he ignored deity; yet in the myths he is elevated above deity. The gods are said to have exulted in his approaching advent, in the hope of obtaining deliverance through his teaching. His mother Mayá is invested with a halo of sacred legend. She is the embodiment of all that is good and beautiful. She is said to have been espoused to the Raja of Kapila, but otherwise she appears in all the purity of a virgin bride. She became incarnate in a dream with a small white elephant. The gods guarded her and her infant from his conception to his birth. Thirty-two miraculous portents occurred on each occasion, of which the most significant were that an earthquake shook the universe, a bright light illuminated all the worlds, the blind saw, the deaf heard, the dumb spake, the lame walked, the crooked stood upright, and prisoners were released from their bonds.[47] Mayá gave birth to the infant without pain, and died seven days afterwards, and was born again as a daughter of the gods. Meantime an ancient sage, as well as many Bráhmans, testified that the child would become a Buddha. Most of these miracles are renewed when Sákya Muni finally entered on his Buddhahood. Subsequently Buddha himself is said to have performed miracles, but they are foreign altogether to his character and teaching. He is represented at times as sitting midway in the air, or as flying through it with the velocity of a sunbeam, or as appearing surrounded with a halo of glory. But these are such palpable fabrications of later miracle-mongers, that they are unworthy of consideration in dealing with ancient Buddhism.[48]

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[47] The remaining portents are puerile monkish inventions. The fires of hell were quenched, the cravings of ghosts were satisfied, all alarms ceased, all diseases were healed, all enmities were forgotten, bulls and buffaloes bellowed with joy, horses and elephants joined in the chorus, lions roared, musical instruments played of their own accord, gold and silver ornaments emitted pleasing sounds, lamps lighted themselves, winds were perfumed, fountains of water suddenly appeared,

Allegorical character of the legend.

It may perhaps be questioned whether the legend of the early life of Gótama Buddha is not to be regarded as an allegory rather than as a real biography. The main incident is common to all civilized humanity. A young voluptuary is surrounded from his earliest years with every sensual gratification, but is at last brought face to face with the three woes which are inseparable from all animal being,—old age, disease, and death. Henceforth he regards all around him through a gloomy medium. The pleasures of life are stripped of all their charms; and the glorious illusions of youth,

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every tree was covered with flowers, rocks were covered with water-lilies, dry wood blossomed, garlands fell from heaven, and other like miracles took place which become tedious by repetition.

[48] Some writers have remarked upon the coincidence between some of the incidents in the life of Gótama, and those which are recorded in gospel history. (See Bp Bigandet's Life of Gótama, and Dr Eitel's Lectures on Buddhism.) The author has no intention of entering upon a field of profitless speculation. The supernatural details in the life of Gótama appear to him to be the monastic inventions of a comparatively modern age, certainly not earlier than the fourth century of the Christian era.

health, and beauty fade away into the sad realities of pain, corruption, and the grave.

Probable origin of the idea of Buddhism.

So far this current of melancholy reflection has found expression in almost every age. The delusions of the world, the unreality of pleasure, and the vanity of life, have been the theme of poets, preachers, and philosophers from time immemorial. Such a phase of religious thought, however, is simply the re-action which follows heartless dissipation; and Buddhism itself seems to have originated in a similar revulsion. From the dawn of antiquity the Gangetic valley appears to have been the area of that materialistic religion which derives its inspiration from the mysteries of sex; and Benares was undoubtedly an ancient centre of this form of religious thought. The Buddhist traditions of every land concur in regarding the old kingdom of Magadha as the cradle of Buddhism, and in fixing the head-quarters of Gótama Buddha in the city of Benares. Buddhism would thus seem to have been the re-action from that sensual worship which was associated with the ideal of strength, beauty, and nudity. The myth of the temptation of Gótama at the commencement of his apostolic career seems to confirm this view. According to this myth, which is only generally indicated in a previous page,[49] the tempter Mara sent his three daughters, in different stages of loveliness, to seduce the apostle back to the world of passions; in other words, to win him back to the old idolatry, which he had deliberately abandoned, and against which he was destined to prove the most determined enemy.[50]

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[49] See *ante*, page 119.

[50] The Buddhist legend of Sákya Muni bears also a remarkable resemblance to

Buddha as a moral and religious teacher.

But the allegory, if any, fades away from the narrative of the career of Buddha as a great teacher. Indeed from this point the life of Sákya Muni involves a strange enigma. His religion for the masses is intelligible to all; but his discipline for the wise involves a conception which is inexplicable. It is easy to conceive of a young prince, surfeited with pleasure, devoting himself to a career of a religious reformer. It is also easy to conceive the motives which induced the reformer to take the vows of celibacy and poverty, and to require his immediate disciples to follow his example. But it seems incredible that such an enthusiastic philanthropist should have formed the conception of Nirvána; and should have positively yearned for a state of perfect abstraction from all existence, amounting not merely to an abnegation of self, but to actual annihilation. It also seems equally incredible that he should have propounded out of his individual consciousness such an artificial system of metaphysical religion, as that which is involved in the modern form of Buddhism, and enforced in the legend of his own life. Accordingly the suspicion arises that the conception of Nirvána, and the metaphysical dogmas of Buddhism, may possibly be mere modern developments of the ancient morality which was taught by Sákya Muni, and that Buddhism was originally a pure and simple faith, which has been strangely perverted by the monastic teachers of a later age.

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the Brahmanical legend of Krishna; although the two narratives illustrate two different currents of religious thought. Krishna, like Sákya Muni, devoted his early life to amorous pursuits, but he pursued his career of sensuality to the end of his days. Again, instead of becoming a moral teacher, he was elevated to the rank of deity. His history and worship will be brought under review hereafter.

Significance of the terms Nirvána and Buddha.

These questions will be further illustrated hereafter, when the Greek accounts of ancient India have been brought under review, and it becomes necessary to deal with the history of Buddhist India.[51] Meantime it may be as well to inquire into the real significance of the terms Nirvána and Buddha, and to ascertain how far they were likely to be associated in the life and teaching of Gótama. It is certain that the two conceptions indicate two important stages in his religious career. First, there is the selfish longing to lead a life of religious mendicancy for the sake of entering Nirvána. Secondly, there is the benevolent longing to become a Buddha in order to teach mankind how to attain Nirvána.

Antagonism between the two conceptions.

There must always have been a strange conflict between these two forms of religious thought, and it is difficult to conceive how they could ever have intermingled in the same channel. The selfish longing to attain Nirvána induced men to sever every tie of affection in order that they might lead a life of contemplation without duties, and consequently without cares. The measures taken by Gótama to attain Nirvána were those, not of an apostle of benevolence, but of a cold-hearted voluptuary. He may have been surfeited with pleasure. He may have acquired a distaste for existence. He may have been oppressed by a religious melancholy bordering on mania. But whatever may have been the cause, he evidently violated every duty of the affections in order to carry out the wild vagary which had taken possession of his soul. In other words, he sacrificed the happiness of his parents, his wife, and his infant son in order to lead a life of seeming independence as a wandering mendicant in the garb of religion. His subsequent training under Brahmanical auspices calls for no special remark. Like many enthusiasts, he had fondly imagined that religious instruction, observances, and contemplation would supply every spiritual need; and in due course he discovered that Brahmanism with its metaphysical speculations was as unsubstantial as chaff or wind.

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[51] See *infra*, chap. v.

Conflict of selfishness and benevolence.

The benevolent longing to become a Buddha was an inspiration of a very different character. According to the monastic story, out of the strong love which Gótama bore to all animated beings, he desired to become Buddha, in order that he might deliver the human race from the miseries of successive transmigrations. But such a sentiment of universal benevolence is not only strained and artificial, but directly opposed to the monastic discipline which was supposed to purify the soul by cleansing it of all affections and desires. Again, the longing to enter Nirvána was simply a selfish dream; and the longing to become a Buddha must surely have been something more than a sentimental desire to communicate this selfish dream to the world at large.

Gotama, a teacher of loving kindness.

The transformation of Gótama into Buddha was preceded by a significant incident. A young woman had mistaken him for a god, and presented him with an offering of thanksgiving in return for having become a happy wife and mother.[52]

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[52] Bigandet, page 71 et seq.; Hardy's Manual, page 166.

This episode belongs entirely to the world of humanity. It touched the heart of Gótama. It awakened the dormant affections which really formed a part of his nature, but had been stifled by sensual indulgences and metaphysical speculation. That a religious mendicant could be moved by such an incident to preach a cold and selfish creed, like that of Nirváña, to the world at large, is beyond all credibility. The plain truth appears to be that Gótama became Buddha in order to teach Dharma, or the religion of duty and loving-kindness, which would promote the happiness of the whole human race both in this life and the next. This, indeed, would have been true and universal benevolence; and the story of the grateful wife and mother would form the natural prelude to such religious teaching. The monastic biographer seems to have accepted the incident, but converted the benevolence which sought to make humanity happier into a benevolence which sought to annihilate humanity altogether.[53]

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[53] The primitive religion of Gótama Buddha appears to have taught that every relation in life has its corresponding duty; and that every fulfilment of duty is a merit, and every deviation from duty a demerit; and that according to the balance of such merits and demerits, so the individual soul would be rewarded or punished in a future life. To teach such a religion might properly be regarded as true benevolence. When, however, monasticism sought to escape from all transmigrations, and consequently from all future states of reward or punishment, the benevolence was converted into the desire to convert mankind into monks. See *infra*, chap. v.

Under this view the antagonism between Nirvána and Buddha becomes more palpable. Nirvána involves the law of deliverance from existence; Buddha involves the duties of existence. Nirvána involves the idea that men should separate themselves from parents, wives, children, and dependents, and devote their whole lives to celibacy, mendicancy, and abstract contemplation. Buddha involves the idea that every relation in life has its corresponding duty; that servants have duties to fulfil towards masters, and masters towards servants; that parents have duties to fulfil towards children, and children towards parents; that kinsfolk and neighbours have duties to fulfil towards each other; that the laity have duties to fulfil towards religious teachers such as priests and monks; and

CHAPTER III.

Demarcation between priest and layman.

There is thus a broad line of demarcation between the abstracted monk who seeks to obtain Nirvána by discipline, and the pious but worldly layman who seeks to obtain happiness by religion. This line is perpetually slurred over in ancient and modern Buddhism, and yet it finds general expression throughout the Buddhist world. The monks scarcely appear to interfere with the religion of the masses. They teach the boys in the monastery schools, but that is in accordance with their discipline. Occasionally they appear to preach, but it is only to recite certain precepts and observances, or certain passages from the life of Buddha, in a kind of chorus. So too the laity have little to do with the monks, unless they themselves enter the monastery. They are ever ready with their alms of food and clothing, and ever ready to pay visits of respect and reverence, but this is only a part of their religion. Still on all occasions there is a genuine and kindly veneration displayed towards the monk, which is rarely exhibited by the people of India towards the arrogant and exclusive Bráhman.

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that humanity itself has certain duties to fulfil towards the whole range of animated beings.

CHAPTER IV.

GREEK AND ROMAN INDIA.

CHAPTER IV.

Invasion of the Punjab by Alexander of Macedon, B.C. 327.

THE year B.C. 327 marks an important era in the history of India. More than two centuries are supposed to have elapsed since the death of Gótama Buddha. The great empire of Magadha was apparently falling into anarchy, but Brahmanism and Buddhism were still expounding their respective dogmas on the banks of the Ganges. At this juncture Alexander of Macedon was leading an army of Greeks down the Cabul river towards the river Indus, which at that time formed the western frontier of the Punjab. The circumstances under which the Greeks appeared in that remote quarter are amongst the most extraordinary in the history of the world. Alexander was only twenty-eight years of age, yet he had already scattered the armies of the great king in three victories which convulsed Asia; and had then ascended the throne of Darius as sovereign lord of Persia and her satraps. He was a hero, a demi-god, who had introduced a new power into Asia, which was a terror and a mystery. The Macedonian phalanx was an embodiment of union and strength; a development of that political cohesion amongst Europeans, which Asiatics can never understand, and against which they are powerless to contend.[1]

Character and policy of Alexander.

Ostensibly, as captain-general of Hellas, Alexander had avenged the wrongs inflicted upon Greece by Darius and Xerxes. Personally, as Alexander of Macedon, he had sought to realize that dream of universal dominion which had long taken possession of his soul. He was not a mere Tartar leader, eager only to plunder and destroy. Neither was he the leader of a new crusade for carrying Greek culture into Asia. He was a soldier statesman of the true Aryan or political type, who identified himself with the empire he had conquered. When he had seated himself upon the throne of Darius, he saw, what every Asiatic statesman has seen, from Cyrus to Nadir Shah, that Persia can never be strong unless she can maintain a paramount power over all the barbarous Scythic tribes to the north and eastward. Accordingly he invaded the north, crossed the western Himalayas, and conquered Balkh; and then crossed the river Oxus and conquered Khiva and Bokhara as far as the Jaxartes. Then, having subdued every enemy in his rear, he approached the Punjab, with the view of realizing his ambitious dream in all its fulness. He believed India to be the extremity of the earth towards the eastern ocean; and he resolved to make it the eastern province of his Asiatic empire.

But the power of the Macedonian phalanx was already on the wane. The Hellenic tie to which it

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[1] The best authorities for the details of the expedition of Alexander are Arrian and Strabo. Where other authors have been consulted, they will be specially cited. The object has been to indicate the general course of Alexander's invasion, and to omit all unnecessary details which throw no real light upon the history of ancient India.

Orientalizing of Alexander and his army.

owed all its strength was beginning to be weakened by orientalism. In identifying himself with a Persian sovereign, Alexander committed the fatal error of endeavouring to recommend himself to his Persian subjects by descending to a Persian level. He exchanged the Greek helmet for the Persian tiara, and became a Persian in his thoughts and ways. He had no passion for women like his father Philip; but he fell in love with Roxana, the beautiful damsel of Bactria, whom he actually made his wife.[2] Under these circumstances he began to imbibe the oriental vices of effeminacy, vindictiveness, and greediness of praise. He listened to the voice of flattery until he believed himself to be something more than mortal. India had been conquered by Herakles and Dionysos;[3] and his parasites assured him that his exploits were already surpassing those of the gods. His passion for fame and glory amounted to a craving which nothing could satisfy short of worship and adoration. How far that passion was gratified during his lifetime, it is impossible to say; but to this day his oriental name of Sekunder is as widely renowned throughout Mussulman Asia, as that of Alexander of Macedon in the western world.

Plan of the Punjab campaign.

The main plan of Alexander's invasion may be sketched in a few words. The Cabul river flows due east past the cities of Cabul, Jellalabad, and Peshawur, and finally empties itself into the Indus near the fort of Attock. Eastward of the Indus is the fertile territory of the Punjab, which is watered by seven tributaries, namely, the upper Indus, the Jhelum, the Chenab, the Ravee, the Beas, the Sutlej, and the Saraswatí; all of which, excepting the Saraswatí, flow into the main stream of the Indus, which thence runs south through the country of Scinde into the Indian Ocean.[4] The design of Alexander was to conquer all the region westward of the Indus, including the territory of Cabul; and then to cross the Indus in the neighbourhood of Attock, and march through the Punjab in a south-easterly direction, crossing all the tributary rivers on his way; and finally to pass down the valley of the Ganges and Jumna, viâ Delhi and Agra, and conquer the great Gangetic empire of Magadha or Pataliputra between the ancient cities of Prayága and Gour.

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[2] Stories are told of the amours of Alexander, but they are mere rumours. The real truth is sufficiently indicated in Athenæus, Book x. c. 45. Alexander was more devoted to wine than to women.

[3] The legend of the conquest of India by Herakles and Dionysos has a religious origin. It seems to have been derived from two different cults, namely:—from the worship of the Sun as Vishnu or Hari; and from that of Siva or Mahadeva as an orgiastic deity. The idea of a military conquest by these deities is purely mythical. See *ante*, page 68, and *infra*, chapter vii.

Necessary conquests.

This plan involved the conquest of several petty kingdoms in succession. Before crossing the Indus there was amongst others a queen of the Assacani, who reigned in a city named Massaga, which was apparently situated in Cabul territory. Again, after crossing the Indus, there were at least three kingdoms in the Punjab to be subdued one after the other, namely;—that of Taxiles between the Indus and the Jhelum; that of Porus the elder between the Jhelum and the Chenab; and that of Porus the younger between the Chenab and the Ravee. Porus the elder was said to have been the most powerful sovereign of them all; but he was placed between two fires, for both Taxiles on one side, and his nephew Porus the younger on his eastern frontier, were his enemies. There were also other kings both on the north and on the south, who were apparently either at war with Porus the elder, or else in friendly alliance. It would thus seem, from the eminence assigned to Porus the elder, that his authority was not limited to the extent of his kingdom; and that he was at least the nominal suzerain or lord-paramount of the Punjab, if not of Cabul; whilst the so-called hostile sovereigns were originally nothing more than refractory vassal kings.[5]

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[4] Five only of these rivers were personally known to Alexander, namely, the Indus, the Jhelum or Hydaspes, the Chenab or Acesines, the Ravee or Hydraotis, and the Beas or Hyphasis. Alexander does not appear to have advanced eastward to the Sutlej. (Compare Burnes's Bokhara, vol. i. chap. 1.) In former times the Saraswatí flowed into the Indus, but it now loses itself in the sand.

Political system of ancient India.

Here it should be remarked that Asiatic empires are generally speaking mere congeries of provinces, satrapies, or vassal kingdoms, severally ruled by local governors or kings, who are each expected to pay a yearly tribute to the suzerain, and to contribute a military contingent in the event of an imperial war. Such a political system is naturally exposed to dismemberment from internal revolt, to sudden revolutions from court factions, and to foreign invasion in moments of weakness or false security. It can only be maintained by the sword, supported as far as may be by an aristocratic priesthood; and hedged round with the pomp, prestige, and supposed divine right of royalty. In spite, however, of revolution and practical dismemberment, such is the conservative character of Asiatic ideas, and the force of routine and traditional authority, that the nominal supremacy of a suzerain will often be retained long after the political ties have been virtually destroyed. Such apparently was the state of Cabul and the Punjab at the time of the invasion of Alexander; although, as will be seen hereafter, he deemed it politic to treat the refractory vassal kings as independent sovereigns.[6]

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[5] This supremacy of Porus is further confirmed by Hindú tradition. The existence of an ancient Kshatriya empire in the Punjab, under what is known as the Lunar dynasty of Rajas, or children of the Moon, is frequently referred to in Sanskrit literature. It was known as the empire of Puru, Bharata, and the Pándavas; and the Sanskrit name of Puru seems still to be preserved in the Greek Porus. Ferishta, the Mussulman historian, states that Porus or P'hoor conquered the whole of Hindustan, including Bengal, as far as the ocean, and that he refused to pay tribute to the king of Persia. Ferishta adds:—"The Brahmanical and other historians are agreed that P'hoor marched his army to the frontier of India in order to oppose the invasion of Alexander. Introductory chapter on the Hindus, vol. i. Briggs' translation.

Strategy of Alexander.

The military operations of Alexander were not those of an ordinary invader. His oriental experiences had already rendered him suspicious of intrigues, but had not entirely destroyed the native generosity of his character. In like manner his oriental indulgences had perverted his moral sense, but had not vitiated his military and political culture. He came flushed with the glory of his Asiatic conquests, profoundly believing in his own high destiny, proud of himself and his irresistible phalanx, but, like a true soldier, neglecting no measure of precaution that would guard against any probable or possible disaster. He feared no enemy in front, but his knowledge of Asiatics taught him that danger might always be apprehended in his rear; that he must make every footing sure before advancing another step; in other words, that he must obtain by policy or force the full submission of every enemy whom he might be compelled to leave behind him. He was prepared to be liberal to those who submitted without a battle; and to be equally liberal to those who only surrendered after an obstinate resistance. But he was resolved to punish with remorseless severity all who attempted to revolt after once submitting, or who sought to deceive him by cajolery or lies.

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[6] The state of India under the Mogul empire during the eighteenth century was much in the same condition; and Clive and Hastings followed the policy of Alexander in treating Subahdars and Nawabs of provinces as independent sovereigns. But such is the power of a mere name, that generations after the Mogul emperor had been stripped of every shred of authority, his shadow of a throne became the rallying point of the mutineers in 1857.

Policy in Cabul: submission of Taxiles.

The first measure of Alexander was a wise stroke of policy. On reaching the Cabul river he sent messengers in advance to the neighbouring princes to announce his arrival, and call upon them to attend his camp and tender their submission. Probably he thus acted in the capacity of sovereign lord of Persia, to whom the whole region had been tributary in a previous generation;[7] but the measure invested him with the character of a protector to all who were hostile to Porus. The result was that many of the princes of the country hastened to his camp. Amongst these was Taxiles, who brought presents for Alexander of extreme richness and rarity. The submission of Taxiles was very gratifying to Alexander. The kingdom of Taxiles intervened between the river Indus and the kingdom of Porus, which commenced at the Jhelum; and thus formed an admirable basis for military operations against Porus. Accordingly Alexander sent a detachment northward to occupy the city and kingdom of Peukelaotis, with the view of making preparations for ferrying the army across the Indus.[8]

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[7] Herodotus, iii. 94, 95, 102.

[8] Taxiles accompanied the expedition, and evidently had an eye to his own interest. He was at enmity with Astes, the king of Peukelaotis; for he had previously harboured a political refugee from Astes, named Sangæus; and it is difficult to avoid the suspicion that he now intrigued to procure the transfer of the

Warlike character of the tribes in Cabul.

Whilst preparations were in progress at Peukelaotis, Alexander was engaged in reducing the tribes eastward of the Indus. These people were dwelling in the territory, which is now called Cabul, and occupied by the Afghans. They are described as being more war-like than any of the other Indians. When defeated in the plains they retired to their walled towns, and when their towns were taken by assault they fled to the mountains. Sometimes they were so alarmed at the reports of Alexander's prowess that they burnt down their towns, and escaped to the mountains, before he came up. At last after some desperate fighting they lost courage, and dispersed to their more distant strongholds.[9] The most formidable enemy was a queen of a tribe called the Assacani. Her name was Cleophes, and she reigned in a city named Massaga. She had engaged seven thousand brave mercenaries from the interior of India, who marched out into the plain and offered the Macedonians battle. Alexander drew them some distance from the city by pretending to retreat, and then turned round and attacked them with his phalanx. The Macedonians gained a complete victory, but could not prevent the fugitives from escaping to the city. Massaga was then besieged, and made an obstinate resistance. At last the mercenaries were disheartened by the death of their commander and their own losses in killed and wounded, and sent a herald to Alexander, and

Reduction of the Assacani. Capture of Aornos.

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kingdom from Astes to Sangæus. The incident, however, is very simply narrated by Arrian. Astes attempted a revolt, and his city was captured after a thirty days' siege, and he himself was slain. The kingdom was then given to Sangæus by Alexander. Arrian, Exped. iv. 23.

[9] Arrian, Exped. iv. 25, 26.

offered to enter his service. The offer was accepted. The mercenaries left the city, and drew up on a little hill near the Macedonian camp. Alexander, however, discovered that they intended to desert that very night, rather than fight their own countrymen; and he accordingly surrounded the hill and cut them all off. He then captured the city, and finally received the submission of queen Cleophes, and re-instated her in the possession of her kingdom.[10] The campaign westward of the Indus was brought to a close by the capture of a famous natural fortress known as Aornos, which was deemed impregnable, and had been a place of refuge for a large number of defeated warriors. Alexander took it after a prolonged struggle. It has been identified with the Mahabun mountain.[11]

Alexander crosses the Jhelum in the presence of the enemy.

When Alexander had fully established his authority in Cabul he crossed the Indus into the Punjab. Here he halted some time at the city of Taxila, and then marched to the river Jhelum, and found that Porus the elder was encamped on the opposite bank with a large force of cavalry and infantry, together with chariots and elephants. The decisive battle which followed on the Jhelum is one of the most remarkable actions in ancient story. Alexander had to cross the river, not only in the face of his enemy, but whilst exposed to the wind and rain of the south-west monsoon. The passage could only be effected by surprise. At length one dark and stormy night he succeeded in reaching a small island in the river with part of his infantry and a select body of cavalry; and then, amidst a tempest of rain and thunder, he and his troops waded through the remainder of the stream breast high, and reached the opposite bank. The lightning probably revealed the men and horses plunging through the river; for the Indian scouts at once rushed off to carry the news to Porus. The Indian king was evidently taken by surprise, but hurriedly despatched his son with a force of cavalry and chariots to oppose the invaders. A sharp engagement ensued, but the Indian chariots could not be drawn through the wet clay, and were nearly all captured. Alexander lost his horse Bukephalus in the action, but the son of Porus was amongst the slain.[12]

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[10] Quintus Curtius relates (viii. 10) that this queen obtained the restoration of her kingdom by the sacrifice of her honour. Justin (xii. 11) repeats the story. Quintus Curtius was no doubt a romancer, but still the incident is not in itself opposed to the law of war as regards women, which prevailed amongst the ancient Kshatriyas. See *ante*, p. 23.

[11] Arrian, Exped. iv. 25—30. General Cunningham prefers identifying Aornos with a ruined fortress named Ráni-gat.—Ancient Geog. of India, p. 58.

Defeat of Porus the elder.

When Porus heard of this disaster, he at once moved against Alexander with the greater part of his army. He took up a position on a firm and sandy plain. In front was a line of two hundred elephants, each about a hundred feet from his neighbour. This line of elephants was supported from behind by masses of infantry; whilst the two flanks of the army were formed of chariots and cavalry. Alexander was strongest in cavalry. Instead, therefore, of attacking the enemy's centre, he assailed the two flanks, and drove in the Indian horse upon the elephants. Porus endeavoured to oppose his elephants to the Macedonian cavalry, but the unwieldy animals could not keep pace with the rapid movements of the horse; and at length were wounded and frightened, and rushed madly about trampling down the Indian infantry. Porus fought with a valour which excited the admiration of Alexander, but was at last wounded and compelled to fly. Ultimately he was induced to tender his submission, but in the true spirit of a Rajpoot he demanded to be treated as a king. Alexander responded with his usual generosity, and the two princes who had recently met as deadly foes now regarded each other as firm friends.[13]

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[12] Arrian, Exped. v. 1—15.

Results of the Macedonian victory: formation of a Macedonian fleet on the Jhelum.

The victory over Porus established the ascendancy of Alexander in the Punjab. It was probably of more consequence to the great Macedonian than his flatterers would acknowledge. A defeat would have been destruction; for Porus would have undoubtedly followed up his success by the conquest of Taxiles; and Alexander would have been left single-handed to cut his way through the war-like mountaineers of Cabul, who had already given him considerable trouble. The victory, however, not only decided the question between himself and Porus, but enabled him to open up a new communication with Persia, viâ the river Indus and the Indian Ocean. He sent out woodmen to cut timber for ship-building in the northern forests, and to float it down the Jhelum; and he founded two cities, Bukephalia and Nikæa, one on each side of the Jhelum; ostensibly in memory of his horse Bukephalus, and in commemoration of his victory, but in reality as suitable spots for the construction of a flotilla on the Indus. The formation of a fleet was indeed in accordance with that soldierly instinct which led Alexander to take on all occasions every precaution that would ensure the safety of his army. But still in dealing with his motives, a large allowance must always be made for his boundless imagination. He had seen crocodiles in the river Indus, and at first fancied that this river was the same as the Nile; and even arrived at the conclusion that by descending the Indus he might find himself in Egypt and the Mediterranean. Further information convinced him of his error, but awakened a new idea. He was assured that the ocean intervened between India and Egypt; and it had ever been the object of his ambition to penetrate to that mysterious ocean, which Homer had supposed to surround the world. It was partly to realize this dream that he purposed conquering the lower Ganges as far as this ocean; and failing that, he hoped to reach the same distant sea by the Jhelum and Indus rivers.

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[13] Arrian, Exped. v. 15—20.

Advance of Alexander to the Chenab: flight of Porus the younger.

Whilst the fleet was being constructed, Alexander continued his march to the Chenab, and crossed that river into the dominions of Porus the younger. This prince, like Taxiles, had been prepared to support the Macedonian invader out of hostility to Porus the elder; but having heard that his uncle had been re-instated in his kingdom and reconciled to Alexander, he was seized with such a panic of fear that he hastily abandoned his throne and went into exile. Alexander accordingly made over his kingdom to the elder Porus, and nothing afterwards is heard of the nephew.[14]

Alexander next crossed the Ravee, when he was called back by tidings of importance. The Kathæi, an important tribe between the Chenab and the Ravee, had broken out in rebellion; and as Alexander never permitted an enemy in his rear, he hastened back and reduced them to obedience by the capture of their capital at Sangala.[15] But meantime the Macedonians had grown weary of their campaign in India. Their spirits had been broken, not so much by the toils of war, as by the wind and rain of the south-west monsoon; and by this time their love of ease and sensual gratification had blunted that passion for glory and dominion which had formerly animated the phalanx. Accordingly they utterly refused to advance to the Ganges, and clamoured loudly to be conducted back to Greece. Alexander remonstrated with them in vain. He urged that the river Ganges was not far off; that it fell into the eastern ocean which communicated with the Caspian; and that if they proceeded they would obtain immortal renown by their conquests and discoveries. But the Macedonians sullenly resisted every attempt to lead them beyond the Sutlej; and Alexander, making a virtue of necessity, at last consulted the oracles and found that they were unfavourable to an onward movement. The expedition of Alexander now loses its interest. He returned with his army to the Jhelum, and embarked on board the fleet with a portion of his troops, whilst the remainder of his army marched along either bank. In this manner he proceeded almost due south through the Punjab and Scinde towards the mouth of the Indus; engaging in hostilities against

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[14] Arrian, Exped. v. 21.

Spirit of the Macedonians broken by the south-west monsoon.

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[15] The Kathæi had formed a confederation with the Oxydrakæ and Malli, who appear to have occupied the territory in the neighbourhood of Multán. After the fall of Sangala these two tribes tendered their submission to Alexander.

certain tribes who offered resistance, or who revolted after making due submission. In some cases the insurgents were encouraged by the Bráhmans; but Alexander wreaked his vengeance by slaughtering every Bráhman that came in his way. At last he reached the Indian Ocean, and beheld for the first time the phenomena of the tides; and then landed his army and marched through Beloochistan towards Susa, whilst Nearchos conducted the fleet to the Persian Gulf, and finally joined him in the same city.[16]

Return of the expedition to Persia.

Surface observations of the Greeks who accompanied Alexander.

The Greeks who accompanied Alexander into the Punjab were careful and acute observers. They accurately described the face of the country, the numerous towns and villages, the abundant harvests, the variety of fruits and vegetables, the cotton shrubs said to produce wool, the sugar-canes said to yield honey, the pillared shades of the banyan trees, the alligators, the elephants, the monkeys, the large serpents, the small cobras, the scorpions, the lizards, the ants, and all the numerous strange sights which meet the eye of every Indian traveller. But they failed to penetrate into the inner life of the people. They saw only the surface, and not very much of that, for they were campaigners in a strange land, harassed throughout by wind and rain; and notwithstanding the enthusiasm of their leader, it is evident that they were utterly weary of the depressing moisture and sweltering heat of the land of Dionysos and Herakles. Some sights attracted their curiosity, but they disclosed little of the thoughts and aspirations of the general population. One important fact may be elicited, that in the Punjab, or at any rate in the countries traversed by Alexander, there was as yet no appearance of caste distinctions. This is proved by the absence of all allusions to caste in the history of Alexander's expedition. It is moreover confirmed by the absence of all similar allusions in the older and more authentic hymns of the Rig-Veda. Had the institution existed, it could scarcely have failed to have attracted the attention of the Greeks; especially as they were eagerly searching for all resemblances between Egypt and India, and would naturally have been struck by such a remarkable similarity in the caste systems of the respective countries.

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[16] Arrian, v. 22, et seq. The military operations carried on by Alexander during his voyage down the Indus are related at considerable length by Arrian, but throw no further light upon the history of India. Some interesting details respecting the identification of localities will be found in General Cunningham's Ancient Geography of India.

Absence of caste in the Punjab.

The absence of such distinctions in the Punjab may be further inferred from the description of the marriage customs, as furnished by the Greeks who accompanied Alexander. According to the strict law, which, as will presently be seen, already prevailed amongst the people of Hindustan, no member of any caste, or hereditary trade or profession, could marry out of his own class.[17] Yet the marriage customs of the Punjab involved ideas altogether foreign to this law, although not foreign to the difference of tribes. Thus in some tribes virgins were offered as marriage prizes in boxing, wrestling, running, and archery; and the winners chose their own brides, but married them without portions.[18] In other tribes a wife was to be bought for a pair of kine,[19] but a

Variety of marriage customs.

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[17] Megasthenes in Strabo, India, sect. 49.

[18] Nearchos in Strabo, India, sect. 66. Arrian, India, c. xvii. This custom may be referred to the ancient Swayamvara. See *ante*, p. 24.

[19] This was the old marriage custom, which prevailed amongst the Vedic Rishis. See *ante*, p. 23.

man might marry as many women as he could maintain. But a custom prevailed in the city of Taxila which plainly indicates that caste, in the modern Brahmanical sense of the word, was unknown. Whenever parents were so poor that they could not procure husbands for their daughters, they exposed the damsels at a marriageable age for public sale in the bazaar or market-place. A crowd of men was collected by the blowing of shell trumpets and beating of drums. The necks and shoulders of the young women were then uncovered; and when a young man was pleased with a damsel, he married her upon such terms as might be agreed upon.[20]

Two tribes described by the Greeks.

Two important classes or tribes, however, are described by the Greeks who accompanied Alexander, who were evidently regarded as superior races; and each class had its own characteristics, which may have subsequently hardened them into castes. These were the wise men, or Bráhmans, who were also called sophists and philosophers; and the Kathæi, who may have been the ancient Kshatriyas.

The Bráhmans.

The Bráhmans or philosophers followed a variety of pursuits. Some were engaged in public affairs, and attended the Raja as counsellors. Others practised religious austerities by remaining in one position for days, and exposing themselves to the blazing sun. Others imparted religious instruction to their respective disciples. Others pursued the study of nature; theoretically perhaps by the contemplative process already indicated, but practically they displayed their knowledge by prognostications respecting rain, drought, and diseases. When not otherwise occupied they repaired to the bazaar or market-place. They were held in great honour as public advisers; and were permitted to take what they pleased from the shops, such as honey, sesamum, figs, and grapes. They went about in a state of nudity, but every house was open to them, even to the women's apartments; and wherever they went they shared in the conversation, and partook of what food was present. Two of them came to the table of Alexander, and took their meal standing; a circumstance which would alone seem to prove the absence of caste ideas amongst the Punjab Bráhmans. When they had finished they retired to a neighbouring spot, and commenced their religious austerities exposed to the sun and rain. These Punjab Bráhmans are said to have regarded disease as a disgrace, and it is added that those who feared its approach burnt themselves alive.[21]

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[20] Aristobulus in Strabo, India, sect. 54, 62. The disposal of maidens by public sale was an old Babylonian custom. It is described by Herodotus, who considered it to be the wisest marriage custom with which he was acquainted. The maidens were put up to public auction. The handsome ones were sold off first, and would fetch high prices from the rich Babylonians. The plainer maidens were helped off by dowries which were provided out of the proceeds. Thus when a handsome maiden was put up, the rich strove who would give the highest price. When a plain damsel was put up, the poor strove who would take her with the smallest dowry. Thus the handsome girls helped the plainer ones to husbands. Herodotus, i. 196.

Curiosity of Alexander.

Alexander was himself much interested in the Bráhmans at Taxila. Neither he nor his Macedonian followers were religious inquirers in the modern sense of the word. The worship of the gods was still maintained in Greece at festivals and sacrifices, and there still existed a strong popular belief in oracles; but the fervid interest and deep religious awe with which Herodotus had gazed on the deities and mysteries of Egypt, were neither felt nor expressed by the men whose intellects had been trained in the political struggles which had long distracted Hellas. To them the gods of India were merely Dionysos and Herakles, the popular gods of their own country;[22] and the religious worship of the people was apparently regarded with a condescending curiosity which bordered on contempt. But from the first the Bráhmans had attracted the attention of Alexander. He had been struck by their fortitude and resolution in voluntarily subjecting themselves to severe austerities and penances; and he was curious to know something of the dogmas which led to such results. Accordingly he sent for them to come to him, but was told that if he wanted to hear their discourse he must come to them. So he sent Onesikritos to converse with them.[23]

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[21] This was not the case with all the Bráhmans; but these Greek accounts will be brought under more detailed review hereafter. Strabo, India, sect. 61, 65.

Interview between Onesikritos and the Bráhmans.

The interview which ensued must have been a strange one, but only those perhaps who are familiar with India can realize it in all its significance. A green jungle between two and three miles from the city. A group of fifteen naked Bráhmans; some standing on one leg, and holding a log of wood above their heads with both hands; others lying or sitting on the bare stones. All exposed to the pitiless glare of an Indian sun, which alone would account for much of their religious mania. A mixed crowd of disciples and wondering worshippers doubtless stood around. The European visitor approached in Greek costume, accompanied by his interpreters; and all present were doubtless eager to hear what words would pass between the stranger and the holy men.[24]

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[22] Mention is also made of Zeus the rainy, who of course was the Indra of the Rig-Veda; and the Hindús are also said to have worshipped the Ganges. Strabo, India, sect. 69.

[23] Strabo, India, sect. 63 et seq.

Arrogance of Kalanos the Bráhman.

Onesikritos appears to have been rather too anxious to propitiate. Moreover the natural arrogance of Kalanos, the Bráhman whom he addressed, was stimulated by such conciliatory language, and possibly by the presence of an admiring auditory. The Greek commenced by saying that the great king Alexander, who was himself a deity, had heard of the wisdom of Kalanos, and desired to be informed of the nature of his teaching. Kalanos was lying naked on the stones, and replied in the language of oriental insolence:—"Your clothing is contrary to nature and offensive to deity: By such pride and luxury, want and misery have been brought upon mankind: In former days grain was as abundant as the dust, and milk and honey, wine and oil, flowed as freely as water: But the deity grew angry at the luxury of the human race, and withdrew the abundance; and if such luxury continues, famine and drought will follow: If therefore you would learn wisdom, you must return to a state of nature, and lie down upon these stones."[25]

Behaviour of Mandanis.

The polite Greek must have been somewhat startled by this extraordinary demand from a naked philosopher. Fortunately a Bráhman, named Mandanis, interposed, and rebuked Kalanos for his insolence to a foreigner. "For my part," said

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[24] Strabo, India, sect. 63 et seq.

[25] Strabo, India, sect. 64.

Mandanis, "I cannot but admire Alexander, who is seeking after wisdom although in possession of an empire: If all kings were like him, the whole world might be compelled to virtue: Know, O Greek! the only true philosophy is that which renders the soul indifferent both to pleasure and pain: Tell me, is this truth known in your country?" Onesikritos replied that Pythagoras had taught a similar doctrine, and had commanded his disciples to eat nothing which had life; and that he himself had heard similar discourses from Sokrates and Diogenes. "So far they are right," said Mandanis; "but they are wrong in being slaves to custom, and in not returning to a state of nature."[26]

Contrast between the two Bráhmans.

But notwithstanding the better behaviour of Mandanis, neither promises nor threats could induce him to come to Alexander. He derided that king's pretensions to deity; he wanted nothing, and he feared no one. "When I die," he said, "my soul will escape from the trammels of the body, and enter into a better and purer state of existence." Kalanos, on the other hand, was a type of the common Bráhman. From one extreme he ran to the other. He attended on Alexander, became a slave to his table, accompanied him when he left India, and rehearsed his praises after the fashion of the old Kshatriya bards. Ultimately he was attacked with disease, and deliberately committed suicide on a funeral pile.[27]

The Kathæi or Kshatriyas.

The Kathæi were perhaps Kshatriyas or Rajpoots.[28] At any rate their customs were of a Rajpoot character.[29] They had a Spartan admiration of strength and beauty. They chose the handsomest man to be their king; and although it is difficult to accept this statement as a well-ascertained fact, yet Porus is said to have been more than six feet high and of excellent proportions. They subjected every child to a public examination when it was two months old; in order that the presiding magistrate might decide whether it was handsome enough to live, or whether death was to be its doom. To this day the crime of infanticide is almost universal amongst the Rajpoots, but it is confined entirely to females. The Rajpoots confess that their daughters are murdered to avoid the difficulty of procuring suitable husbands, and to escape the inordinate expense of marriage ceremonies; and it is impossible to say how far the existing custom has been borrowed from the ancient usage. Marriages amongst the Kathæi were guided by the mutual choice of the bride and bridegroom; in other words, they were a form of the ancient Swayamvara;[30] but according to the Rajpoot custom, known as Satí, the living wife was burnt alive with the deceased husband.[31]

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[26] Strabo, India, sect. 64.

[27] The incidents recorded in the text respecting the Bráhmans are based on the authority of Onesikritos himself. Strabo, India, sect. 63—65. The suicide of Kalanos by burning himself alive, will be brought under review hereafter.

Infanticide.

Satí.

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[28] In modern vernaculars the Kshatriyas are called Kattris. The Kathæi, however, have been identified with the Chatties of Kattagwar in Guzerat.

[29] Strabo, India, sect. 30.

[30] See *ante*, p. 24.

[31] According to the Greek authorities (Strabo, India, sect. 30) the Satí was instituted to check a practice of the women to poison their husbands for the sake of a younger lover. This statement does not harmonize with the assertion that the marriages were based upon mutual affection. Satí might have proved a check to poison in days when girls were compelled to accept old men as their husbands; but nothing was to be feared from loving wives. The latter, however, obeyed the ordinance, from being imbued with an unquestioning faith that they would thereby join their husbands in a heaven of felicity.

Alexander had invaded the Punjab during the rainy season of B.C. 327, and reached the Indian Ocean about the middle of B.C. 326. Meantime Philip remained at Taxila as his lieutenant or deputy, and commanded a garrison of mercenaries and a body-guard of Macedonians.[32] When Alexander was marching through Beloochistan on his way to Susa, the news reached him that Philip had been murdered by the mercenaries, but that nearly all the murderers had been slain by the Macedonian body-guards. Alexander immediately despatched letters directing the Macedonian Eudemos to carry on the government in conjunction with Taxiles, until he could appoint another deputy; and this provisional arrangement seems to have been continued until the death of Alexander in B.C. 323.[33]

Mutiny of the Indian mercenaries.

Death of Alexander, B.C. 323: political anarchy.

The political anarchy which followed this catastrophe can scarcely be realized. Alexander was not thirty-three, and the conquests which he had already completed were sufficient to fire the imagination of every true soldier throughout all time. Yet his busy intellect had continued to form new schemes of empire and glory. He would circumnavigate Africa and explore the Caspian. He would conquer Arabia, Italy, and Carthage. He would create a universal dominion which should be bounded only by the ocean, and Babylon should be its capital. But these ambitious dreams had vanished in a moment. A drinking bout had been followed by a mortal fever, and the would-be demigod was lifeless clay. The ghastly tidings must have caused universal consternation. The vast empire of Alexander was held together by no political tie whatever beyond the mere terror of his name. The appointment of a successor was thus of urgent and paramount importance; but there was literally no one to succeed, excepting a bastard half-brother who was hopelessly imbecile, and an unborn babe by an Asiatic wife, who might by chance prove to be a son. Ultimately the idiot and the infant were placed upon the throne as puppets; and the generals of the deceased Alexander hastened to the provinces to prepare for wars against each other which were to deluge the world with blood.[34]

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[32] Arrian, Exped. v. 8.

[33] Arrian, vi. 27.

Expulsion of the Greeks from India by Sandrokottos.

Meantime India was forgotten. Eudemos took advantage of the death of Alexander to murder Porus; but was ultimately driven out of the Punjab with all his Macedonians by an adventurer who was known to the Greeks as Sandrokottos, and to the Hindús as Chandragupta.[35] This individual is said to have delivered India from a foreign yoke only to substitute his own. The notices of his life, however, are of considerable interest, as he is the one Indian Raja who is known at once to Greek history, Hindú tradition, the Buddhist chronicles, and the Sanskrit drama.

Greek accounts of Sandrokottos.

According to classical writers, Sandrokottos was at the city of Taxila when Alexander was there at the commencement of his Punjab campaign. He was an exiled prince from the great kingdom on the lower Ganges, said to be about eleven days' journey from the Punjab.[36] He was bitterly hostile to the reigning sovereign, named Aggrammes, and denounced him as a weak king of mean extraction, who permitted his dominions to be overrun by banditti.[37] Sandrokottos stated that Alexander could easily conquer the kingdom on the Ganges; but at the same time the Indian exile had so exasperated the great Macedonian by his impertinence, that he only saved his life by a speedy retreat from the Punjab. This impertinence probably consisted in exaggerated notions of his own importance, and a pertinacious assertion of his own claims to the throne of Aggrammes, which would be irritating to a conqueror who respected no claim but that of the sword. After Alexander left the Punjab, Sandrokottos experienced a strange run of good fortune. By the aid of banditti he captured the city of Patali-putra, and obtained the throne; and then drove the Greeks out of India, and established his empire over the whole of Hindustan and the Punjab.[38]

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[34] Alexander had two Asiatic wives, Roxana and Stratira. Roxana was the daughter of a Baktrian chief on the upper Oxus, who had attracted his admiration, and whom he had accordingly married. Stratira was a daughter of Darius, and was treacherously murdered by the jealous Roxana after the death of Alexander. Roxana and her semi-Asiatic son were not likely to be held in much esteem by Greek generals; it is not therefore surprising that both were treated as puppets and ultimately murdered.

[35] Diodorus Siculus, xix. 1; Justin, xv. 4.

Thirteen years after the death of Alexander, the political convulsions which had shaken the civilized world to its centre began slowly to subside. The vast empire was dismembered into four great provinces; and although the whole area was the theatre

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[36] It was called the kingdom of the Gangaridæ and Prasii, and probably corresponded to Magadha and Kosala, the modern Behar and Oude. The name of Prasii seems to linger in that of Prasa-najit, king of Kosala. See *ante*, p. 138.

[37] The father of Aggrammes is said to have been a barber, who had an amour with the queen, and murdered her husband, and then placed his own son Aggrammes on the throne (Quintius Curtius, ix. 2). The scandal is unworthy of credit. It is simply the oriental form of abuse, which is directed not against the individual, but against his mother and other female relatives. The story of the murder will be explained further on. See Appendix I. Buddhist Chronicles.

[38] Justin, xv. 4. Plutarch, Life of Alexander.

Establishment of the Greek Bactrian empire of Seleukos Nikator.

of frequent wars, yet the provinces were beginning to harden into independent kingdoms. The region between the Euphrates and the Indus fell to the lot of Seleukos Nikator, who dated his reign from the year B.C. 312, which is the era of the dynasty of the Seleukidæ. Seleukos Nikator had accompanied Alexander in his expedition into the Punjab; and he appears to have been ambitious to carry out the designs of his great commander. Like him he conquered Bactria; and then he turned towards the south and east, and appeared on the bank of the Indus. But he found himself confronted by a far superior enemy to the one whom Alexander had encountered. There was no longer a dismembered empire to be subdued in detail. Sandrokottos had already consolidated his imperial authority over the Punjab and Hindustan; and was apparently enabled to concentrate such an overwhelming force on his north-west frontier that Seleukos deemed it expedient to cultivate his friendship, rather than assail him as an enemy. A treaty was accordingly concluded between the Greek sovereign and the Hindú Raja. Sandrokottos supplied his Greek neighbour with a force of five hundred elephants. In return Seleukos ceded the mountain territory westward of the Indus; and also gave one of his own daughters to be the bride of his Indian ally. This alliance was strengthened by the residence of a Greek ambassador named Megasthenes at the court of Sandrokottos; and it will hereafter appear that the most authentic information respecting the condition and civilization of the Gangetic valley at this period is supplied by Megasthenes.[39]

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[39] Strabo, India, sects. 36, 53, 57; Ariana, sect. 9. The Greek and Hindú

Marriage of the Hindú Raja to a Greek princess.

The marriage of a Hindú Raja to a Greek princess is an unexpected event in the history of India. In the Punjab it would perhaps have been less remarkable, because of the general absence of caste ideas. But in the Gangetic valley caste institutions had been maintained from time immemorial; and Megasthenes, who resided for a considerable period at Patali-putra, bears direct testimony to the fact that in the kingdom of Sandrokottos no one was allowed to marry out of his caste or hereditary profession.[40] There is reason, however, to believe that Sandrokottos was a convert to Buddhism, and consequently not unwilling to prove to his Hindú subjects that he had thrown off the trammels of caste. But under any circumstances such a marriage must have created a profound impression amongst a people so conservative as the Hindús. It will be seen hereafter that traces of this marriage between Sandrokottos and a Greek princess lingered for many centuries in both Brahmanical and Buddhist tradition; and the event ultimately gave rise to a controversy, which must have caused considerable agitation in the old Hindú world, as to whether the son of a Raja by a Sudrá queen could rightly inherit the throne.

Hindú civilization described by Megasthenes: authenticity of his evidence.

The pictures of old Hindú civilization which are presented by Megasthenes possess a value which has scarcely been sufficiently appreciated. They are drawn from real life, and generally from what the ambassador himself saw; and though they are confined to the surface of society, they are of the

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authorities respecting Sandrokottos are reprinted in Wilson's Hindú Theatre, vol. ii. Preface to the Mudrá Rákshasa.

[40] Megasthenes in Strabo, India, sect. 49.

highest importance as the authentic observations of a Greek political officer, elaborately drawn up at a period when such literary labour probably formed his chief amusement and occupation amidst the dreary monotony of an Asiatic court with its miserable intrigues and tedious ceremonial.[41] Above all, Megasthenes, like Herodotus, was evidently anxious to furnish correct information. Those of his statements which were based upon mere hearsay evidence, may sometimes prove to be fabulous; but for this the Greek ambassador cannot be held entirely responsible. Asiatics will exaggerate. Their imagination is boundless, and only equalled by their ignorance and credulity. No doubt they told stories, with the utmost gravity and child-like faith, of ants as big as foxes digging for gold, of men strong enough to pull up trees, of people with ears hanging down to their feet, and of other strange monstrosities.[42] Megasthenes believed these stories,

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[41] The position of the Greek ambassadors or residents at Patali-putra, seems to have strongly resembled that of the political agents of the British government at the court of Mandalay, the capital of the kingdom of upper Burma. The author was especially struck with this analogy during a visit to the political agent at Mandalay in 1870.

[42] Strabo is unduly severe upon Megasthenes, and denounces him as a fabulist (Introd. sect. 9). Yet it is easy for any one conversant with India to point out the origin of many of the so-called fables. The ants are not as big as foxes, but they are very extraordinary excavators. The stories of men pulling up trees, and using them as clubs, are common enough in the Mahá Bhárata, especially in the legends of the exploits of Bhíma. Men do not have ears hanging down to their feet, but both men and women will occasionally elongate their ears after a very extraordinary fashion by thrusting articles through the lobe. Other stories have been discredited, which are based upon actual fact. Megasthenes describes serpents with membranous wings like bats, whose moisture will putrefy the skin; but these are nothing more than the common house lizards, and certainly their moisture will cause acute inflammation. Again, Megasthenes describes a river named Silas, in the Himalayas, on which nothing will float; and here he has been obviously misled by some legend of Kailasa, the mountain heaven of Siva or Mahadeva.

If there was one story more than another which excited the wrath of Strabo, and naturally repeated them; and it may be added that similar stories were related by Sir John Mandeville, and implicitly believed by our forefathers. But when Megasthenes tells us of what he saw, his statements may be accepted as authentic and reliable; although they are susceptible of further explanation by the light of the larger experience which is available in the present day.

Ancient capital of Patali-putra, near the modern Patna.

Of Megasthenes himself little is known beyond the fact that he was a Greek ambassador, and apparently the first of his countrymen who had reached the banks of the Ganges, and entered the great and remote city of Patali-putra. He must have noted, though he does not say so, the quaint shipping in the river, which no doubt kept up a communication through the greater part of the empire, from the neighbourhood of the Punjab to the Bay of Bengal. He certainly observed with a military eye the great wooden wall or palisade which surrounded the city; and he mentions that it was pierced with holes through which the archers could discharge their arrows against a besieging force. Outside this wall was a ditch which ran round the city, and probably communicated with the river; and which served both as a means of defence and a common sewer. He was impressed with the immense size of the city. Patali-putra was a vast metropolis in the shape of a parallelogram, extending ten miles along the bank of the river, and two miles into the interior. There

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it was that of a people whose ears hung down to their feet. Yet the story is still current in Hindustan. Baboo Johurree Dass says:—"An old woman once told me that her husband, a sepoy in the British army, had seen a people who slept on one ear and covered themselves with the other." (Domestic Manners and Customs of the Hindús. Benares, 1860.) The story may be referred to the Himalayas. Fitch, who travelled in India about 1585, says that a people in Bootan had ears a span long.

the exiled Greek gazed upon the dreamy oriental life which still meets the eye in a Hindú or Burmese capital. The stately elephants, with richly ornamented howdahs moving slowly but majestically along; chariots and horsemen followed by numerous retinues; crowded bazaars, with their endless variety of shops, and industrious artisans of every class; the soldiers with their bows and arrows, their swords, bucklers, and javelins; the shameless Yogis and arrogant Bráhmans. Megasthenes also describes a festival procession such as may still be occasionally seen in eastern cities. An array of elephants with furniture and trappings of gold and silver; numerous chariots drawn by four horses, or by several pairs of oxen; large bodies of attendants, handsomely attired, bearing huge vessels or goblets of gold and silver, as well as tables, state chairs, drinking cups, and bowls of Indian copper, richly set with emeralds, beryls, Indian carbuncles, and other precious stones; whilst the whole procession was invested with a sensational character from being associated with wild beasts, such as hump-backed oxen, panthers, tame lions, and a multitude of birds of variegated plumage and fine song.[43]

Royal palace and zenana.

Megasthenes furnishes a picture of the royal palace at Patali-putra, which seems to have been more of a Tartar than an Aryan type. It was a splendid building occupied only by the Raja and his women; for even the body guard was stationed outside the gate. The palace women are said to have been purchased of their parents; but this statement probably refers only to those who filled the place of attendants or slaves. As regards the queens Megasthenes maintains a strict reserve; and thus nothing whatever is known of the married life of the Greek princess. As regards the Raja, it is said that he lived in such perpetual fear of treachery, that he never slept during the day, and frequently changed his bed at night, as a precaution against surprise.[44] It was unlawful for the Raja to get drunk; and according to a story which was told to the Greek ambassador, any woman who murdered a Raja whilst the latter was in a state of intoxication was rewarded by being made the queen of his successor.[45] The story, however, is open to question. No doubt it originated in the fact that a woman has occasionally murdered an Asiatic sovereign, on the understanding that she should become the wife of the heir to the throne. Such a promise, however, is generally broken by the new monarch, who can rarely bring himself to make the murderess his queen.

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[43] Megasthenes in Strabo's India, sects. 36, 69. Compare also the preparations for the installation of Ráma as Yuvaraja. History, vol. ii., Rámáyana, chap. 8.

A similar procession was to be seen at Rangoon in 1871, when the famous Shwé-Dagon pagoda was crowned with the gold Htee, or royal umbrella, excepting that on the latter occasion there were no wild beasts.

Duties and amusements of the Raja.

The Raja was not always secluded in his palace. He left it whenever he took the command of the army, or sat in his court as judge, or offered sacrifice to the gods, or went on a hunting expedition.

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[44] The present king of upper Burma, or Ava, who evidently belongs to the Indo-Chinese type, although he claims a Kshatriya origin, leads a life of seclusion very similar to that of Sandrokottos. He changes his bed-room every night as a safeguard against sudden treachery.

[45] Megasthenes in Strabo, India, sect. 55. The laws of Burma are also extremely severe against intoxication; indeed drunkenness is one of the five great crimes in the Buddhist code of morality. In 1845 the reigning sovereign was a drunkard, and had become a terror alike to his queens and ministers; at last he was suddenly seized in a state of intoxication, and placed in a state of confinement; and he is said to have been ultimately smothered in the recesses of the palace.

Sandrokottos seems to have been an able general, and no doubt spent much of his time with his army. Megasthenes describes his camp, which consisted of four hundred thousand men, and was yet maintained in good order and discipline. No useless or disorderly multitudes were tolerated. Theft was so rare amongst the troops, that the value of the articles stolen on any single day never exceeded two hundred drachmas. When the Raja sat as judge, he remained in the court the whole day, and allowed nothing to interrupt him. As regards his religious worship no further details are furnished; the reference, however, to his going out to sacrifice to the gods, proves that at this period, at any rate, the state religion was Brahmanical, whatever might have been the individual belief of Sandrokottos. The royal hunting expeditions are described at considerable length. The Raja went out with a crowd of women, who in their turn were surrounded on all sides by a number of spearmen; whilst drums and gongs were beaten in front, probably to warn off all intruders. The road was guarded with ropes, and every stranger who passed within the ropes, whether man or woman, was put to death. So long as the Raja hunted within the enclosures, he discharged his arrows from a high seat, whilst two or three armed women stood near him. When, however, he hunted in the open plain he discharged his arrows from an elephant, whilst his women accompanied him in chariots, or on horses and elephants. On these occasions all the women were provided with arms, as though they were going on a military expedition.[46]

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[46] Strabo, India, sect. 55. In the Hindú drama of Sakúntalá, Raja Dushy-

Hindú banquets.

Of the inner life of the palace nothing more is recorded. One statement, however, has been preserved which seems to indicate that the ambassador was familiar with one phase of old Hindú life. He says that it was the custom at banquets to place a table, like a side-board, before each individual. A golden dish full of boiled rice was then placed on each table; after which different sorts of meat dressed in the Indian style were served up to the several guests.[47] In the present day a Hindú host will entertain his European guests in accordance with their own customs; but there is no reason to doubt that in the third century before Christ, Indian curries were served up much after the fashion described by Megasthenes.

Difference of civilization in the Punjab and Hindustan.

The civilization which prevailed in the great Gangetic empire of Sandrokottos was essentially different from that of the Punjab kingdom under Porus. The people were strictly divided into castes and hereditary professions. Again, the army was not composed of contributions from feudatory princes, but was a vast standing camp, maintained solely at the charge of the king. The government was not administered by feudal or vassal chieftains, under a suzerain or lord-paramount; but by a network of officials which spread over the entire empire. The Raja, as already seen, was an irresponsible and all-powerful despot, bearing a closer resemblance to a Tartar monarch, like Chenghiz or Timour, than to a Rajpoot suzerain like Porus.

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anta is represented as being attended in the chase by Yavana women, with bows in their hands, and wearing garlands of wild flowers. Professor Monier William's translation, Act II. Scene 1.

[47] Megasthenes in Athenæus, Book IV. c. 39.

But before entering more minutely into these marks of difference, it will be necessary to indicate the social structure and political administration of the great Gangetic empire.

Ryots or cultivators.

The mass of the population, and the main support of the state, consisted of the husbandmen or cultivators, who answered to the modern Ryots. These cultivators were servants of the Raja. In other words, the Raja was not merely the sovereign of his dominions, but the actual proprietor of the land in the European sense of the word; and the Ryots cultivated this land as labourers, and received a share of the produce as wages. Thus a large proportion of the produce of the empire was stored up every year in the royal granaries, and partly sold to the trading and manufacturing classes, and partly devoted to the maintenance of the army and civil administration.[48] Meantime the Ryots were apparently happy and contented. "They are," says Megasthenes, "a most mild and gentle people. They never resort to the cities either to transact business, or to take a part in public tumults. They are exempted from all military service, and pursue their labours free from all alarm. Indeed it often happens that at the same time, and in the same part of the country, the army is engaged in fighting the enemy, whilst the husbandmen are sowing and ploughing in the utmost security."[49]

Traders and artisans.

The second important class, which also contributed to the support of the state, was composed of the traders and artisans. All the members of this class carried on their several avocations under a system of official surveillance; as a tax was levied on every sale, and a stated service was required from every artisan. This was not in accordance with the European idea that tradesmen and mechanics should contribute to the support of the state in return for the protection they received; but originated in the Asiatic idea, that they should pay their lord and master, either in money or service, for the privilege of pursuing their several avocations within his dominions. The manufacturers of arms and builders of ships came under a different category. They were employed solely by the Raja, and worked for no one else; and they were paid for their services both in money and produce. The arms thus manufactured were stored up in the royal magazines; and were supplied to the soldiers by the commander-in-chief as occasion required, and returned to the magazines when the expedition was over. The ships that were constructed by the royal ship-builders were in like manner placed in the charge of the admiral of the royal navy, who hired them out to any merchant who might require shipping for the purposes of traffic.[50]

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[48] This process of storing up the grain must have checked famine.

[49] Megasthenes in Strabo, India, sect. 40. He states that the Ryot's share was only one-fourth. This must be a mistake.

Army.

The third class consisted of the soldiers, who formed a standing army supported by the king. When not engaged on active service, they are said to have spent their time in idleness and drinking. But they were always ready to start on an expedition; for they had only to attend in person, and were furnished with all that was required throughout the campaign. Horses and elephants were returned to the royal stables after every expedition. Every elephant carried four men on his back; the driver and three archers. Every chariot carried three men; the driver, and two fighting men. These chariots were only drawn by horses on the field of battle. On the march they were drawn by oxen, whilst the horses were led by a halter, so that their spirit might not be damped, or their legs chafed and inflamed, before going into action.[51]

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[50] Megasthenes in Strabo, India, sect. 46. The present Burmese government is of a somewhat similar character. The king has on occasions sought to be the only trader and manufacturer in his dominions.

Sages or philosophers.

The fourth class was composed of the so-called philosophers, some of whom were gymno-sophistæ, or "naked philosophers." Under this general head of philosophers are evidently included both Bráhmans and Buddhist monks; and the notices which have been recorded by Megasthenes, although somewhat confused, are worthy of particular consideration. "The philosophers," says Megasthenes, "are the smallest in number of all the castes, but they are the highest in rank. They are sometimes engaged by private persons to perform sacrifices and other public rites. But they are also employed by the Raja in a public capacity, to collect any useful information which may tend to the improvement of the earth, or of the animals who live upon the earth, or conduce to the advantage of the state. At the beginning of every new year they attend the king at the gate, and form what is called the Great Assembly; and those who have made any discoveries, and committed them to writing, are expected on such occasions to declare them publicly. Those whose observations are found to be correct

The Great Assembly.

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[51] Megasthenes in Strabo, India, sects. 47, 52.

are exempted for life from all contributions or tribute. But those whose observations are found to be incorrect, are prohibited, after the third attempt, from publishing any further information."[52]

Reign of Sandrokottos: a transition period.

The foregoing account of the Great Assembly throws a further light upon the new forms of religious thought, which were slowly fermenting on the banks of the Ganges. It was a transition period between the age of animal sacrifice and the age of benevolence and humanity. The Raja still offered sacrifice, and indulged in the pleasures of the chase; and no doubt continued to eat flesh meat, dressed in the fashion which Megasthenes has described. But he was already being brought under the influence of the reforming spirit of the age. He utilized the philosophers, or learned class, by engaging them in the work of experiment and observation, with the view of ascertaining what would improve the productions of the earth, and especially the condition of animals, for whom all believers in the metempsychosis had a tender regard. At the same time the philosophers were also to ascertain what would tend to the advantage of the government. Such were the matters which were publicly declared and discussed in the presence of the Raja, at the Great Assembly which was held at the commencement of every new year.

Division of the philosophers into Bráhmans and Germanes (Srámans).

The philosophers were divided by Megasthenes into two distinct communities, the Bráhmans and the Germanes (or Srámans), which will be found hereafter to correspond to the Bráhman sages and the Buddhist monks. But he seems to intimate that both classes were alike employed upon the public duty of developing the resources of the country, and improving the condition of animals. Indeed it may be inferred from his observations that neither Bráhmans nor Srámans were at this period devoted so entirely to religious study and contemplation as the later literature of both communities would seem to imply. Strangely enough he preferred the Bráhmans to the Srámans; but upon this point it will be better to submit his views in full.

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[52] Megasthenes in Strabo, India, sect. 39.

Life of the Bráhman sages.

"The Bráhmans," says Megasthenes, "are held in higher repute than the Germanes, because they are better agreed as to their opinions. From their earliest infancy they pass under the charge of a succession of guardians and preceptors suitable to their advancing years. They dwell in a grove in the front of the city, within an enclosure of moderate size. There they live on frugal fare, abstain from all animal food, and lead lives of celibacy. They spend their time in grave discourse, and are ready to converse with all who listen with respect; but should any one interrupt the discourse by speaking, coughing, or any other noise, he is at once expelled from their society on the ground that he cannot maintain sufficient self-control. After the expiration of thirty-seven years, a Bráhman is permitted to return to secular life, to wear fine robes and gold rings, and to marry as many wives as he pleases.[53] But such Bráhmans do not teach their philosophy to their wives, lest the women should become depraved, and divulge things which ought to be concealed.[54]

"The Bráhmans chiefly discourse respecting

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[53] This is certainly opposed to the division of the life of a Bráhman into four ages, as laid down by Manu. See *ante*, p. 86.

[54] Megasthenes in Strabo, India, sect. 59.

Dogma of the metempsychosis.

death. They believe that death to them is only a birth into a real and happy life. They discipline themselves to prepare for death. They teach that ideas of happiness or misery are only illusions of the imagination, inasmuch as the same circumstances will affect the same individual sometimes with joy and at other times with sorrow.[55]

Doctrine of the supreme spirit.

"In some of their speculations regarding physical phenomena, the Bráhmans display a childish simplicity. At the same time they hold several of the same doctrines which are current among the Greeks. They teach that the world is generated and destructible, and of a spherical figure; and that the god who made it, and governs it, also pervades the whole of it. They believe that the earth is situated in the centre of the universe, and that water was the chief element in its formation. They have peculiar ideas of the soul, and the principle of generation. They also invent fables, after the manner of Plato, respecting the immortality of the soul and the punishment in Hades.[56]

Question of self-destruction.

"These philosophers do not maintain the dogma of self-destruction. On the contrary, they consider that those who commit this act are fool-hardy. Those who are severe by nature will wound themselves, or cast themselves down precipices. Those who are impatient of pain drown themselves. Those who are of ardent tempers throw themselves into the fire. Kalanos belonged to this last class; he had no control over himself, and was a slave to the table of Alexander."[57]

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[55] Megasthenes in Strabo, India, sect. 59.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Megasthenes in Strabo, India, sect. 68. The remarks of Megasthenes with reference to the suicide of Kalanos are very obscure. He evidently failed to

Greek opinions of the Bráhmans.

The remarks of Megasthenes respecting the Bráhmans are valuable as the impartial description furnished by a competent eye-witness. He considered that they occupied a higher position than the other philosophers, apparently because they were comparatively free from those sectarian and schismatic disputes which were agitating the Buddhist communities. The Greek ambassador admired the Brahmanical philosophy, which was in accordance with the systems taught in the schools of Pythagoras and Sokrates; but he was sufficiently imbued with the free-thinking spirit of the age, to deride their religious views as regards a future state, as being based upon fables rather than upon experience.

Greek opinions of the Buddhist monks.

As regards the Germanes [or Buddhist monks[58]], Megasthenes seems to have derived his information from their opponents. He speaks of them as being of inferior repute to the Bráhmans. The most honourable were a class of hermits who dwelt in the forests, and subsisted on leaves and wild fruits. They abstained from wine, and led lives of celibacy.

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apprehend the ideas which prompted the recreant old Bráhman to commit such horrible self-martyrdom. According to the Vedic idea Fire was a deity who purified and refined; it was also a divine messenger, who carried the sacrifice to the gods. Kalanos had forfeited his position in the eyes of his fellow Bráhmans. He had lost caste by following Alexander out of Indian territory. He was seventy-three years of age when he was attacked by disease for the first time. Death by fire relieved him from all the terrors of pain and old age, and purified his soul from every sin, and carried it away to the abode of the gods.

In the Rámáyana a story is told of a sage, named Sarabhanga, who committed a similar act of self-martyrdom, which enabled him to throw off his mortal body as a serpent casts its slough, and to assume the form of perpetual youth. History, vol. ii., Rámáyana, chap. 15.

[58] It is a disputed point whether the Germanes or Srámans were Buddhists or Jains. The point is of little consequence in dealing with broad currents of religious thought. The Jains were originally a sect of Buddhists. Their chief saint Parisnath flourished B.C. 200. They have twenty-four saints; the Buddhists have only seven Buddhas in the present universe. The Jains have caste; the Buddhists none. Both ignore deity.

CHAPTER IV.

The Raja was accustomed to consult them by means of messengers. Next in estimation was a class of physicians, who were engaged in the study of the nature of man. They lived frugally on rice and meal, which were freely supplied by the masses.[59] It will be seen hereafter that these physicians played an important part in the practical system of Buddhism which finds expression in the edicts of Asoka.

The four great castes of the Hindú people have now been brought under review; namely,—husbandmen, tradesmen, soldiers, and philosophers. Generally speaking, they correspond to the four castes of Brahmanical law; namely, — Súdras, Vaisyâs, Kshatriyas, and Bráhmans. But Megasthenes distributes the people of India into seven castes, by adding three other classes which, however, are not castes properly so called; namely,—shepherds, inspectors, and officers of state.[60]

Three extra castes described by Megasthenes.

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[59] Megasthenes in Strabo, India, sect. 60. Kleitarchos, who accompanied Alexander to the Punjab, furnishes accounts of a class of philosophers whom he calls Pramnæ (Kleitarchos in Strabo, India, sect. 70, 71). He speaks of them as a contentious class who opposed the Bráhmans, and derided them for occupying themselves with the study of physiology and astronomy. These Pramnæ are sometimes identified with the Buddhists, but if so they could scarcely have been the hermits who lived in remote forests, nor the physicians who studied the nature of man. Possibly they may have been ordinary Buddhist monks, who scorned all pursuits excepting those connected with religion.

[60] It appears strange that Megasthenes should have divided the people of India into seven castes. Practically the number of castes in India is endless; every little trade and profession forming a hereditary caste of its own, out of which its members may not marry. But all these nondescript castes are supposed to be included in one or other of the four great castes, or are referred to the pariah or outcaste population.

Herodotus, however (ii. 91), had divided the people of Egypt into seven castes; namely,—priests, soldiers, herdsmen, swineherds, tradesmen, interpreters, and steersmen; and Megasthenes may therefore have taken it for granted that there were seven castes in India. It is a curious fact that from the time of Alexander's expedition to a comparatively recent date, geographers and others have continually drawn analogies between Egypt and India. Egypt was watered by the Nile; India was watered by the Indus. The Nile produced crocodiles; the

Shepherds and hunters.

The shepherds included hunters, and were certainly not a caste of Hindús. They were nomades dwelling in tents, and were probably of Tartar origin. Their avocations were precisely those which a Brahmanical people, who revolted at the idea of slaughter, or even of trading in animals, would naturally leave as a monopoly in the hands of foreigners. The regular occupation of these shepherds was breeding cattle, and selling or letting out beasts of burden; and no other class in the kingdom was allowed to engage in this cattle trade. They also gained a subsistence by hunting. They were employed by the king to destroy the wild animals and birds which infested the sown fields; and for this public duty they received an allowance of corn from the royal granaries.[61] The inspectors and officers of state must in like manner be excluded from the number of hereditary castes. They were merely individuals, some of whom were Bráhmans, who were selected to fill particular and responsible posts.[62]

Inspectors.

The internal administration of the Gangetic kingdom was conducted by inspectors, who seem to have also acted as magistrates. Some were ap-

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Indus produced alligators. The Nile had a delta; so had the Indus. Beans grew in Egypt, and beans grew in the Punjab. The same animals were to be found in Egypt and India. The people of Ethiopia were darker complexioned than the people of Egypt; and the people of southern India were darker complexioned than the people of northern India. Sometimes the analogy failed. The hair of the Ethiopians was crisp and woolly; that of the southern Hindús was straight and glossy. Strabo ascribed this to difference of climate; the atmosphere of southern India being more humid than that of Ethiopia. The humid climate, however, only prevailed on the western coast of Malabar; Strabo knew nothing of the eastern coast of Coromandel, where the air is singularly dry.

Strabo divides the people of Egypt into three castes only; namely, husbandmen, soldiers, and priests. Egypt, sect. 3.

[61] Megasthenes in Strabo, India, sect. 41.

[62] Ibid. sect. 49. The shepherds corresponded to the Chandálas. See *infra*, chap. v.

pointed to the city, some to the camp, and some to the districts or provinces. Their duty as inspectors was to collect full information respecting every movement that was going on, and to send private reports to the king. Their duty as magistrates combined the ordinary routine of the executive, with other measures of supervision and surveillance which are of an essentially oriental character.[63]

System of espionage.

The duties of inspection may be summed up in the one word "espionage." The inspectors comprised the best and most faithful servants of the government; but they were little more than spies and informers. The public women, as in most Asiatic cities, furnished the best information; and thus the metropolitan inspectors employed the city courtezans, whilst the army inspectors employed the female camp followers. In all Asiatic states the work of espionage forms an important element in the administration. It is not perhaps so necessary in principalities where political or feudal ties have any existence, such as in the older Rajpoot kingdoms. But the majority of Asiatic principalities are mere congeries of villages and families, which may be strong as separate and individual communities, but have never been wielded together into a single nationality, bound together by a common sense of mutual interests or patriotic sentiments. Under such circumstances the most searching system of espionage is necessary to guard against sudden outbreaks, mutinies, or revolutions which at any moment might overturn a throne; and it was not confined to bazaars and camps, but often penetrated into the inner domestic life of citizens and soldiers.[64]

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[63] Megasthenes in Strabo, India, sect. 50.

Surveillance of trade and manufactures.

The duties of the inspectors, as magistrates and executive officers, implied a strict surveillance over all the manufactures and commerce of the kingdom; ostensibly perhaps to ensure good workmanship, and prevent fraud; but in reality for the purpose of levying a tax, amounting to one-tenth of the price of every article.

Duties of the six divisions of city inspectors.

The inspectors, or magistrates of the city, were formed into six divisions, each of which consisted of five officials. One division maintained a close supervision over the working of all arts and manufactures. A second division presided over the sale of all such articles, to prevent old goods from being sold as new ones. A third division presided over all sales and exchanges in produce. This division apparently comprised royal brokers, who received the produce from the royal granaries, after the payment of the share to the cultivators; and then supplied it to the retailers in the bazaars, and maintained a supervision over the trade. They took charge of the measures that were employed, and allowed no one individual to deal in various kinds of articles, unless he paid double rates of taxation on all his sales. A fourth division collected the tax for the king, which, as already stated, amounted to one-tenth of the price of the article sold; and any attempt at fraud in the payment of this tax was punished by death. A fifth division registered all births and deaths, with every particular of time and place, for the twofold object of levying a tax, and punishing any concealment. A sixth division entertained all strangers or foreigners, who came as envoys or might possibly be spies.[65] They furnished such visitors with suitable lodgings, and appointed attendants ostensibly to wait upon them, but really to observe their mode of life and duly report their actions. If one of the strangers happened to fall sick, this division of magistrates took special care of him; and if he died they buried him, and took charge of his property.[66]

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[64] In the present day this system of espionage is not a political necessity in the states which are included within the limits of the British Indian empire; because the feudatory princes are more or less guaranteed against war and rebellion by the strong arm of the paramount power. But in a native state, like upper Burma, which has not as yet been brought under the system of subsidiary alliances, and which has been the theatre of plots, insurrections, and revolutions for centuries, a system of espionage is naturally extended over the whole kingdom, and bears a strong resemblance to that which prevailed in the old Gangetic empire. A chronic terror pervades the court and palace at Mandalay, corresponding to that which pervaded the court and palace at Patali-putra. The king never ventures out of his palace for years at a time, lest in his absence a rebellion should break out within the palace walls, and a recreant prince should obtain possession of the throne.

Collective duties of city inspectors.

In addition to these special duties appertaining to each division, the city magistrates performed other duties in their collective capacity. They took charge of the markets, harbours, and temples; they repaired all public works when necessary; and they fixed the prices of all articles and commodities that were sold in the shops and bazaars.[67]

Army inspectors.

The army inspectors, or magistrates, were in like manner formed into six divisions, each of which consisted of five persons. One division was associated with the chief superintendent of the royal navy, and made all the necessary arrangement for water transport. A second division was associated with the officer in charge of the bullock trains, and made similar arrangement for the land transport of military engines, arms, commissariat for men and beasts, and other necessaries for the army. This division also furnished army attendants, such as grooms, mechanists, and beaters of drums and gongs; for they despatched foragers for grass by the sound of the gong. The third division had charge of what was necessary for the infantry. A fourth division had charge of what was necessary for the cavalry. A fifth division took care of the chariots. A sixth division saw after the elephants.[68]

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[65] In the modern administration of upper Burma royal officers perform duties very similar to those described by Megasthenes. Some officials under the Kampat Woongye are in charge of manufactures; others act as royal brokers for the sale of produce; whilst an official, known as the Kulla Woon, is especially appointed to receive and entertain strangers. In former days, a tax amounting to one-tenth of the price of the article was levied on all goods imported by sea in the Burman dominions. F. Sangermano's description of the Burman empire.

[66] Strabo, India, sect. 51.

[67] Ibid.

District inspectors.

The duties of the inspectors, or magistrates, in the districts are but slightly touched upon. The Greek ambassador probably found more difficulty in collecting information from the provinces, than in obtaining it at the capital. Some of the district officers had charge of the rivers, and measured the land, as was done in Egypt. In other words, they observed the effect of the yearly inundations during the rainy season. Others inspected the great tanks or reservoirs, from which water was distributed by canals; so that all might have an equal share in the irrigation.[69] Others, again, superintended the shepherds and hunters, and rewarded those who kept the fields clear of birds and vermin, whilst punishing those who neglected their duties. They collected the taxes, and superintended all the various work-people who were engaged in connection with the land, such as wood-cutters, carpenters, workers in brass, and miners generally. They also superintended the public roads, and placed pillars at intervals of every ten stadia, or about a mile and a quarter, to indicate the by-ways and distances.[70]

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[68] Strabo, India, sect. 52.

[69] This observation seems to militate against a previous statement that all the land belonged to the king as sole proprietor. But seeing that the cultivators received a share of the produce as wages, it may be supposed that they were personally interested in the yearly out-turn of grain.

Officers of state.

The so-called seventh caste, including officers of state, must be dismissed with a bare notice. Megasthenes merely states that the seventh caste consisted of counsellors and assessors of the king; and that to these persons belonged the offices of state, the tribunals of justice, and the whole administration of affairs.[71]

Administration of the Gangetic empire compared with that of Burma.

The administration of the Gangetic empire thus described by Megasthenes, bears a remarkable resemblance to the native administration of the existing kingdom of upper Burma, or Ava. In both cases there is an entire absence of either an aristocratic element, or a popular one. The administration is composed of mere officials, whose title and position wholly depend upon the will of the sovereign. In Burma it is a mere bureaucracy without any hereditary influence or political training. Every official is profoundly obsequious to the reigning sovereign, whether he be the rightful prince or a usurper; and consequently revolutionary attempts to subvert a king are of comparatively frequent occurrence, as, if successful, they neither affect the administration nor the masses of the population.[72]

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[70] Strabo, India, sect. 50.

[71] Ibid. 49.

[72] Perhaps the best published account of Burma and its constitution is to be found in Father Sangermano's description of the Burmese empire, printed at Rome, in 1833, for the Oriental Translation Society. The Father spent twenty-six years

Adaptation of the administration to the Hindú population.

But notwithstanding the apparent defects in the administration of the Gangetic empire, it seems to have been adapted to the people of the country. It was an irresponsible despotism, but of a paternal character; and it was feared and obeyed by a population, who have hitherto been supposed to be as unfitted as children for the exercise of any political independence, or share in the administration outside their own village or family community. It has already been seen that Megasthenes praises the cultivators, who formed the bulk of the population, as being the most gentle and contented in the world. He even expatiates on the orderly conduct of the camp, and the absence of the crime of theft, in a standing army of four hundred thousand men. Of the people of India generally, he says that they are happy because of the simplicity of their manners and their frugal mode of life. They had but one extravagance, and that was a love of ornament which to this day is a characteristic of all classes of the community. They never drank wine, excepting at sacrifices.[73] Their or-

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in Burma, and the author has been enabled to test his information, and supplement it with additional notes, during a voyage from Rangoon via Ava, Amarapura, and Mandalay, to the remote town of Bhamo, on the frontier of Burma towards China, a distance of some thousand miles up the river Irrawaddy.

The general resemblance between the courts of Patali-putra and Mandalay is so striking that it is easy to conjecture that the court in which king Sandrokottos sat as judge was the Hlot-dau, the Luttó of Sangermano, in which the king occupied the principal seat, and the ministers sat as counsellors or assessors.

The Hlot-dau, or supreme council of Ava, exercises all the powers of a senate, a high court, and a cabinet. Its functions are legislative, judicial, and executive. As a senate, it might veto any act or order of the king. As a high court of civil and criminal justice, it tries all important cases, and is the highest court of appeal. As a cabinet, it exercises all the powers of government; and every order of the king is issued by the Hlot-dau in the name of the ministers of whom the court is composed. In the present day, however, it is the shadow without the substance of a constitution.

[73] This wine was probably the soma juice of the Vedic hymns.

dinary beverage was made from rice. Their food consisted of what he calls rice-pottage, which no doubt corresponded to rice and curry. Their laws were so simple that they had few lawsuits, and none whatever in the case of pledges and deposits. They required neither witnesses nor seals, but made their deposits and confided in one another. Even their houses and property were unguarded. Megasthenes adds that they had no written laws, and were even ignorant of writing, and regulated everything by memory. This statement must be accepted with some reservation. The Bráhmans certainly possessed a sacred literature, but they would never have produced their books to the Greek ambassador; and if questioned concerning them, would have denied their existence, as the easiest way of escaping from the difficulty. Indeed Nearchos, who accompanied Alexander to the Punjab, distinctly states that the people wrote letters upon cloth, which was smoothed for the purpose by being well beaten.[74]

Authenticity of the Greek pictures of ancient India.

The pictures of ancient India, which are thus furnished by the Greeks, are valuable as much for their realism as for their authenticity. They utterly invalidate the gross exaggerations of the Sanskrit epics, whilst clearing away much of the haze which surrounds the legendary life of Sákya Muni. They do not exhibit an advanced stage of civilization, like that which will hereafter be found reflected in the Hindú drama; and indeed it may be inferred that as yet the Hindú drama had no existence, for no mention is made of theatrical entertainments of any kind. Again, the court of Sandrokottos was not a centre of literary culture, like the courts of the later Hindú sovereigns; for Megasthenes makes no allusion to wits or philosophers, poets or story-tellers, displaying their talents or accomplishments under the patronage of a munificent Raja. On the contrary, the royal residence at Patali-putra was a mere fortified palace in which the Raja dwelt in strict seclusion, surrounded only by women; and the chief pleasure in which he indulged outside his palace was that of hunting in the company of armed females. Strabo considered that these royal excursions resembled the joyous processions of the worshippers of Dionysos; but in reality they were simply hunting expeditions, in which the Raja was protected by a body-guard of amazons. The so-called literati or philosophers of ancient India, are described as mere religious recluses, dwelling in groves outside the cities, where they taught a strange metaphysical religion, and practised still stranger rites and austerities.

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[74] Nearchos in Strabo, India, sect. 67.

Review of the Greek accounts of the Ryots.

The information supplied by Megasthenes as regards the agricultural class, who are represented by the modern Ryots, is more pleasing, but equally realistic. As already seen, the husbandmen were the main support of the government and the vast standing army; but their condition could have been little better than that of serfs, who cultivated the whole area of arable land as the royal domain, and received a share of the harvest for their maintenance.[75] They were, however, happy and contented. It may therefore be inferred that they were not exposed to unnecessary interference, so long as they did their duty to the land. They were simple in their wants, and probably domestic in their lives. They knew nothing of politics; and they took no part in rebellions or revolutions. From time immemorial they had doubtless been brought up in the hereditary belief that all the land belonged to the Raja, that they were his servants, and that their primary duty was to cultivate the soil for his benefit; and this humble status they appear to have accepted with that blind ignorance which often constitutes material happiness. When the harvest was abundant, their share sufficed for all their wants; and in exceptional times of drought or famine, it is only natural to suppose, that as servants of the Raja, they could be supplied with food from the royal granaries, in the same way that the elephants and horses of the Raja received their daily rations. They married wives, and they became fathers of families; and if a great part of their time was devoted to labour in the fields, they doubtless had their times of holiday, and celebrated the same festivals which they still observe. Under such circumstances they would decorate themselves, and indeed the whole village, with garlands of flowers, not forgetting the trees, the temples, and the images of the gods; and then with the aid of some Bráhman they would offer their little sacrifices, and feast on such simple delicacies as their wives could pre-

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[75] The evidence of the Greek ambassador as to the respective shares of the Raja and the Ryot is deserving of consideration. He says that the share of the cultivator was only one-fourth; consequently the royal share must have been three-fourths. According to the concurrent testimony of the sacred books of

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the Bráhmans, and the narratives of the two Chinese pilgrims Fah-Hian and Hiouen-Thsang, the Raja only received one-sixth of the produce. Perhaps the Raja received three-fourths of the produce from his own special demesnes, which were cultivated by serfs; and one-sixth of the produce of all the lands throughout his empire, which were cultivated by the Ryots.

pare. Such scenes of rural life are not unknown to modern India, although they are often alloyed by superstitious fear or priestly rapacity. But the Indian Ryots had one advantage over the agricultural population of almost every other country. They were not liable to military conscription. Indeed at no period of history do they seem to have been forced from their homes, and compelled to serve in the armies of the state. Megasthenes describes the soldier class as already forming an army of four hundred thousand men; and according to his account the Ryots were always regarded as non-combatants. Hostile armies might be fighting in their neighbourhood, but the Ryots went on ploughing and sowing, utterly regardless, and perhaps unconscious, of the work of slaughter that was going on around.[76]

Character of the supervision over trades and artisans.

Megasthenes furnishes no information respecting the traders and artisans, excepting that they were subjected to an official supervision which seems to have amounted to oppression. Indeed such a system had a tendency to fetter all trade, whilst opening every avenue to corruption. But it is quite in accordance with Asiatic ideas. Indeed to this day the Hindús have proved themselves patient under every interference and exaction, provided only that nothing is done contrary to custom. It is the novelty of a measure which excites their suspicion and alarm, and occasionally drives them to acts of resistance or turbulence. It is therefore easy to infer that traders and artisans were reconciled to a system of supervision and extortion, under which perhaps they could in their turn purchase permission to charge a higher price or dispose of an inferior article.

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[76] Megasthenes must have been all the more surprised at this immunity of the Indian cultivators, because during the Peloponnesian war hostilities generally commenced with the destruction of the standing corn of the enemy. But in the primitive religions of the Hindús, in which the earth was especially deified as the goddess of fecundity, such a proceeding would probably have been regarded as a species of sacrilege.

Reticence of Megasthenes as regards politics and religion.

Upon some points Megasthenes is strangely reticent. Thus he only describes the external machinery of civil and military administration, and furnishes no information as regards politics or wars. Possibly he may have been deterred by diplomatic considerations from dwelling upon such topics; or he may have assumed that they would prove of but little interest in the western centres of Greek civilization. The religion of the Hindús seems scarcely to have excited his curiosity. Had Herodotus travelled in India, as he travelled in Egypt, he would no doubt have minutely described the several deities, with their temples and forms of worship; but he flourished in an earlier age, when religion was still the foundation of all intellectual culture. Megasthenes, on the contrary, was apparently imbued with the materialism of a later and rationalistic age, when reverence for popular deities was dying out in Hellas, and the Hindú sacrifices to their barbarian gods would be regarded with a pitying smile. Megasthenes certainly expresses the opinion that the Bráhmans were in better repute than the Srámans, but he does not appear to have compared their dogmas. He simply saw that the Bráhmans agreed in their opinions, whilst the Srámans were always wrangling.[77]

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[77] This opinion of Megasthenes as regards the contentious character of the Buddhist monks is of more value than might be expected. Notwithstanding the superiority of their moral tenets, they are a most disputatious set; and unless kept within the strict area of orthodoxy by superior ecclesiastical authority, are prone to fall into heresy. Such was their character in the latter days of Sákya Muni, and such is their present character on the banks of the Irrawaddy.

Greek ignorance of Bengal.

It seems somewhat extraordinary that neither the Greeks nor the Romans knew anything of Bengal. They had acquired a certain stock of information respecting the Punjab, and the Gangetic valley as far as Patna, or Patali-putra, but they had never made their way through Bengal as far as the mouths of the Ganges. They had some knowledge of the western coast of India from the mouths of the Indus to the island of Ceylon;[78] but the eastern coast of Coromandel, and indeed the whole of the Bay of Bengal, was utterly unknown. Strabo, who flourished at the commencement of the Christian era, was conscious of this want of information. The Indian trade was carried on from Alexandria, viâ the river Nile and old Suez canal, as far as the western shores of India; but, as Strabo himself says, very few of the merchants from Egypt ever succeeded in reaching the Ganges; and those who did were so ignorant, as to be quite unqualified to furnish an account of the places they had visited.[79]

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[78] Strabo, India, sects. 14, 15.

[79] Strabo, India, sect. 4. The yearly voyages undertaken by the Roman merchants between Egypt and western India are sufficiently described by Pliny (vi. 26). The voyage out lasted about seventy days; that is, thirty days from Egypt to Ocelis, the modern Gehla, on the south-western corner of Arabia; and forty days from Ocelis to Muziris, probably the modern Mangalore, on the western coast of India. The Indian Ocean was at this period infested by pirates, who seem to have had strongholds on the Malibar coast, especially in the neighbourhood of Muziris. Accordingly every Roman ship carried a company of archers on board. Muziris was also undesirable on account of the distance from the roadstead to the port, which rendered it necessary to carry all cargoes for loading and discharging on board canoes. Barace, possibly the modern Baroche, was thus considered a more convenient port. It is said to have been situated in the kingdom of Pandya or Pandion. The pepper of Cothinara, probably the modern Cochin, was brought to Barace in canoes.

Two important marts on the western coast are also mentioned by Ptolemy, namely, Plithana and Tagara. Plithana has been identified with Páitan, on the river Godavari, the capital of Sálivâhana, whose era, corresponding to A.D. 77, is still maintained throughout the Dekhan. The name of Tagara still lingers in that of Deoghur, the later capital of Maharashtra, at present known as Dowlatabad.

Embassy of Pandion or Porus to Augustus Cæsar.

One authentic story has been preserved of an embassy sent by an Indian prince, named Pandion or Porus, which is invested with historic interest. This Porus was probably a representative of the same old family of Puru, to which the former Porus belonged who had been defeated by Alexander some three centuries previously.[80] It is easy to conceive that rumours of the victory at Actium, the conquest of Egypt, and the greatness of imperial Rome, would reach the shores of western India, and inspire a powerful Raja, like Porus, with a desire, not unknown amongst Asiatic princes, to secure a powerful ally from the western world.[81] Porus sent a letter to Augustus Cæsar, stating that he was sovereign over six hundred Rajas, and earnestly desired the friendship of the Roman emperor; and that he would permit a Roman army to march through his dominions and render assistance in any expedition that was just. This letter was written in Greek upon a skin, and contained the names of the ambassadors who were sent with it; from which it appeared that on reaching Roman territory they had all died excepting three. The presents consisted of a man born without arms, some large snakes, one serpent ten cubits long, a river tortoise three cubits long, and a so-called partridge said to be larger than a vulture. The servants of the embassy included eight men who appeared naked with girdles round their waists,[82] and were fragrant with perfumes. A holy man, either a Bráhman or a Sráman, accompanied the embassy. Nothing further is known of this extraordinary mission, excepting that the letter and presents were duly made over to the Roman authorities. The holy man proceeded to Athens, probably from a natural curiosity to learn something of Greek philosophy. His conduct there must have created a profound sensation amongst the sages of the aca-

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[80] A dynasty of Rajas, known as the Pandyan dynasty, appears to have reigned over a kingdom also called Pandya, which formerly occupied the whole of the south-eastern quarter of the Peninsula, and had its capital at the town of Madura. It has accordingly been conjectured that it was one of these Pandya Rajas who sent the embassy to Augustus. It seems almost impossible that any Indian sovereign in such a remote quarter, could either hope for an alliance with the Roman emperor, or even suppose that Augustus could desire to march a Roman army through his dominions. On the other hand, the tradition of the invasion of Alexander the Great would still be preserved in the Punjab; and the reigning Porus might readily arrive at the conclusion that Augustus Cæsar was another Alexander. Moreover it will be seen hereafter that the embassy was accompanied by a priest, either a Bráhman or a Sráman, from Baroche on the western coast at the mouth of the Nerbudda. Such a man might easily have found his way to the Punjab; but it would have been hard for him to have reached Madura.

It is not, however, impossible that an ancient empire, extending over an undefined region in the west and south, may have been nominally ruled by Pandya Rajas, who were representatives of the house of Porus or Pandion, and had some connection with the Pándavas mentioned in the Mahá Bhárata. Both Arrian and Pliny have preserved traditions of such a Pandyan empire. Herakles is said to have had an only daughter, named Pandæa, whom he subsequently married, and thus became the father of a race of Pandya sovereigns. Arrian also states that Herakles gave Pandæa a kingdom bearing her name (India, chaps. viii. and ix.). Pliny adds that this is the only kingdom throughout India which is ruled by women (vi. 23); but that there are kings of other nations, who were descended from Pandæa. Traces of this Amazonian empire are undoubtedly to be found amongst the Malabars on the western coast to this day (see History, vol. i., part ii., Mahá Bhárata, chap. xvi., note 17). Colonel Tod has pointed out an analogy in the legend of the birth of Pándu (compare Rajasthan, vol. i., page 30).

[81] This passion of eastern princes to form remote alliances under certain circum-

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stances amounts almost to a political instinct. It is generally developed by immediate danger, an utter ignorance of European power, and an overweening sense of their own importance. Thus in the sixteenth century one Indian prince sent an embassy to the Great Turk to assist him against the Portuguese. In the last century Tippoo Sultan of Mysore opened up negotiations with the first Napoleon in the hope of obtaining assistance against the English. In our own time Theodore of Abyssinia, the present king of Burma, and the Panthay Sultan of Talifoo, have each sought to form alliances with European powers. Still more strangely Florus mentions (iv. 12) that ambassadors from China came to Augustus Cæsar.

[82] This was the cord worn by the three highest castes, viz. Bráhmans, Kshatriyas, and Vaisyas. See History, vol. ii., pages 529, 545.

demy. He declared that as his life had been hitherto one of unvaried success, he intended to escape from existence in order to avoid unexpected calamity.

Suicide of an Indian sage.

The idea had been familiar to the Greeks since the days of Crœsus and Periander, but they must have been surprised at seeing it realized in fact. The Indian sage prepared a pyre, and then naked, anointed, with his girdle round his waist, and a smile upon his countenance, he leaped upon the pile and perished in the flames.[83]

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[83] Strabo, India, sect. 73. The following inscription is said to have been set up over the tomb of the Hindú philosopher:—"Zarmano-chegas, an Indian, a native of Bargosa, having immortalized himself according to the custom of his country, here lies."

The name "Zarmano," seems to imply that he was one of the Germanes, or Srámans. Dion Cassius (ix.) calls him Zarmanus. The word "Chegas" has been identified with Sheik. Bargosa is apparently a corruption of Barygaza, the modern Baroche.

CHAPTER V.

BUDDHIST INDIA. B.C. 300 TO A.D. 645.

CHAPTER V.

Two classes of Buddhist records: the edicts and the chronicles.

THE annals of Buddhist India open up an entirely new field of historical research. They comprise two distinct classes of records, illustrating two distinct forms of religious thought. The first and most authentic are the rock and pillar edicts of Raja Priyadarsi, who is generally identified with the celebrated Asoka, the reputed grandson of Sandrokottos. These edicts were promulgated in the third century before the Christian era, and are an expression of that pure system of moral teaching which has been described as the religion of the many. The second class of records have no such claims to contemporary authority, and are consequently more open to question. They consist of Buddhist chronicles of the Rajas of Magadha, which were compiled in the fourth or fifth centuries after the Christian era, or at least seven centuries after the promulgation of the edicts of Priyadarsi. They are the expression of that monastic teaching which was embraced only by the wise and thoughtful few.[1]

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[1] There is a third class of records which are of greater value than either the edicts or the chronicles, but it belongs to a later date. It consists of the travels of the Chinese pilgrims, Fah-Hian and Hiouen-Thsang, who respectively resided several years in India in the fifth and seventh centuries of the Christian era. The narratives of their travels have been translated into French by M.M.

Religion of the heart, and religion of the intellect.

This twofold character of Buddhism has been fully indicated in dealing with the legend of the life of Gótama Buddha. The religion of the heart was for the many; the religion of the intellect was for the few. The religion of the heart was one of humanity, in which the affections were recognized as the necessary part of existence, and the duties of the affections were broadly laid down in the five commandments, and expanded into a full system of morality in thought, word, and deed. This religion recommended itself not merely to the heart, but to the natural sense of justice which prevails amongst the masses, by teaching that virtue would be rewarded and vice would be punished in a future state of existence, either within the pale of animated being, or in some remote heaven or hell under the sway of gods or demons. But this popular religion is only dimly expressed in the legend of the life of Gótama Buddha. Indeed the legend was compiled in an age of intellectual monasticism, when the transmigrations of the soul were regarded as a hopeless chain of miserable existences, and when it was assumed that the one object of mankind was to escape from the universe of existence, whether on earth or in heaven. Accordingly the four great truths, known as the law of the wheel, and the four ways of deliverance, by which man could attain Nirvána, were declared to be the only real wisdom; and the ideal of a perfect life was that of the monastery, where the soul abstracted itself from all humanity and existence, until it was freed from every tie of affection or

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Abel-Rémusat and Stanislas St Julien. They will be brought under review in the after-part of the present chapter.

desire, and sunk for ever into eternal rest or annihilation. Thus the religion of the heart finds expression in the edicts of Priyadarsi; whilst the religion of the monastery finds expression in the later Buddhist chronicles of the Rajas of Magadha.

Antiquity of celibacy in India.

But although an interval of seven centuries intervenes between the promulgation of the ancient edicts and the compilation of the later chronicles, it by no means follows that the two religions should be referred to two widely different epochs. On the contrary, it has already been seen in the preceding chapter, that in the third century before the Christian era, Buddhist celibates under the name of Germanes or Srámans[2] had already made their appearance in the empire of Sandrokottos on the Ganges. Indeed celibacy similar to that of the monastery seems to have existed in India from time immemorial. In its first form it was the revolt of the intellect against the popular idea of deity and the lower instincts of humanity; and it appears to have subsequently diverged into the two currents of religious thought known as Brahmanism and Buddhism. But the Bráhmans formed part of a hereditary caste of priests, who married and became fathers, and maintained caste distinctions, and were even employed at the public and private sacrifices to the gods. The Srámans were more strictly monastic, but at the same time apparently more philanthropic and more practical. They rejected the caste system by declaring that men of all castes were equally subject to the miseries of existence. They thus abstracted themselves from humanity without necessarily losing their sympathies for humanity. By regarding all men as equal from a religious point of view, they seem to have imbibed sentiments of universal brotherhood and benevolence, which could not be developed under Brahmanism, nor indeed under a caste system of any kind. One important class of Srámans lived in strict seclusion in the forests after the manner of Brahmanical hermits; and like the higher order of Bráhmans, these Srámans were selfishly engaged in contemplations and austerities for their own individual well-being. But still many of the Srámans were devoting their lives to that practical philanthropy which springs from the larger development of the affections. Megasthenes describes a class of medical Srámans who were benevolently engaged in curing the diseases of their fellow-creatures; and so far were they from practising for the sake of gain, that they were content to live frugally on such rice and meal as the public might choose to give them, and which every one was ready to offer. Megasthenes also describes a class of missionary Srámans, who were occupied in promoting the religious welfare of the masses, by inculcating ideas respecting hell or Hades, which in their opinion tended to the spread of piety and sanctity. It has also been seen that the researches and discoveries of all natural philosophers were discussed in the presence of the Raja, at what has already been described as the Great Assembly, which was held at the commencement of every new year. It is therefore apparent, from the impartial testimony of the Greek ambassador, that three hundred years before the Christian era the spirit of practical benevolence was already at work among the Sráman monks, and had probably been at work from an immemorial antiquity.

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[2] The term is indiscriminately spelt Germanes, Srâmanes, Sarmanas, and Srâmans. In Tamil the term Sarmanauls is used. In the Mahawanso, the Buddhist monk is known as a Sâmanero, the Pali form of the Sanskrit Srâmana. There is some doubt as to whether the word refers to Buddhists or Jains; but it was certainly applied to monks as distinct from priests or Brâhmans.

Discovery of the edicts of Priyadarsi.

A new and unexpected light is thrown upon this movement by the discovery of the rock and pillar edicts of Raja Priyadarsi. Megasthenes only saw the surface of missionary operations, which he could scarcely be expected to appreciate at their right value. Indeed he seems to describe the labours of the itinerant doctors and teachers with all the covert contempt which a cultured Greek would feel as regards the philanthropic labours of Indian barbarians. But the edicts by which Raja Priyadarsi explained his measures and promulgated his views, furnish a much deeper insight into a religious revolution, which was calculated to regenerate the Indian world. Indeed these edicts are amongst the most interesting relics in the religious history of man. They also serve to indicate the extent of the Indian empire of Priyadarsi, for they are to be found in such widely separated localities as Guzerat in western India, Behar and Cuttack in eastern India, as well as in Allahabad, Delhi, and Affghanistan.

Conception of Dharma as distinct from monasticism.

The edicts of Priyadarsi inculcate goodness, virtue, kindness, and religion, as summed up in the one emphatic term Dharma. This conception of Dharma is free from every monastic element. There is no warring against the affections under the monastic plea of quenching the fire of the passions. There is no trace of that ascetic spirit which would take away all the poetry of life, and deprive youth of all its pleasures and beauty of all its charms. There are no sentimental sorrowings over the miseries and illusions of existence, no yearnings for a life of celibacy and seclusion, no taste for metaphysical speculations, and no morbid aspirations after Nirvána. Dharma might be almost defined as a religion without a creed and without a theology; for it indicates the simple belief that by acts of goodness and kindness all human beings may promote their own happiness both in this life, and in the life hereafter, without any reference whatever either to worship or deity. Moreover, Dharma cannot be positively identified with Buddhism, although the Buddhist monks of a later age applied the name of Dharma to their own law. The edicts refer to both Bráhmans and Srámans, and to the respect due to both classes of holy men, but that is all. There is one solitary edict in which Priyadarsi recognizes the religion of Gótama Buddha, and refers to the law and assembly at Magadha; and this edict will be brought under consideration hereafter. But with this single exception, the edicts of Priyadarsi contain no allusion whatever to Buddha, either as a teacher or an apostle, or by any of his names; and consequently they do not express the formula of the Buddhist faith:—"I take refuge in Buddha, the Law, and the Assembly." They teach Dharma, and Dharma alone.[3]

The edicts of Priyadarsi promulgate Dharma in

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[3] The edicts of Raja Priyadarsi were originally translated by the late Mr James Prinsep, and his version was subsequently revised by Professor H. H. Wilson, in the Journal of the Asiatic Society, vol. xii., article v., on the "Rock Inscriptions of Kapur di Giri, Dhauli, and Girnar." Compare also vol. viii., article xv. The versions of Professor Wilson are no doubt the more accurate transliterations, and are accordingly printed in parallel columns with those of Mr Prinsep in the Appendix to the present volume. It will be seen that in the original renderings of Mr Prinsep there is a greater depth of religious feeling, and a keener sympathy with the natural piety which finds expression in the edicts, than is displayed in the severer versions of Professor Wilson.

Subject matter of the edicts.

the form of certain precepts of morality, which lie at the root of that religion of the heart which is developed by the affections. They inculcate dutiful service to father and mother; kindness and help to all kinsfolk, neighbours, and acquaintance; filial veneration to spiritual pastors; reverence and almsgiving to Bráhmans and Srámans; respect and obedience to masters; kindly consideration towards servants and dependents; frugality and temperance for the sake of increasing the ability to be kind and benevolent; abstinence from all evil speaking and slandering; and last, though not least, a tender regard for the whole animal creation. These edicts are not, however, confined to the promulgation of duties. Some of them specify the measures which were carried out by the Raja for the promotion of the welfare of his subjects. Others, again, are a vindication of his policy, and throw considerable light upon his reign and character. The edicts may therefore be regarded from three different points of view; as conveying his ideas of religious duty; as indicating the progress of his administration; and as illustrating his personal history.

Duties of the affections.

The edicts which refer to religion or duty scarcely call for comment. They commend themselves to the judgment of all men. They express the universal religion of humanity. The duties they enunciate are taught by every creed; by Christians and Jews, as well as by Buddhists, Bráhmans, and Mussulmans. They are enforced in the edicts by the simple plea that their fulfilment will ensure happiness both in this world and in the next. In some edicts the idea of happiness in the next life is associated with a conception of heaven. Otherwise there is no allusion to that succession of future lives which finds expression in the doctrine of the transmigration of the soul. Still less is there any allusion to that ultimatum of monastic teaching,—eternal rest and annihilation in Nirvána.

Expression of duties in the edicts.

The general character of the edicts which enforce the fulfilment of duty may be gathered from the following paraphrase :—"Men celebrate a variety of festivals ; on recovery from sickness, on marriage, on the birth of a son, and on commencing a journey. But such festivals bear no fruit. The great festival of all is duty ;—the pious devotion of children to their parents, the respect of servants to masters, the kindness of masters to slaves and dependents, generous help to friends and kinsfolk, alms-giving to Bráhmans and Srámans, and a tender regard for all living creatures. This is the festival that brings forth fruits, for by so doing men may attain heaven."[4]

Measures of Raja Priyadarsi.

The edicts which refer to the administration of Raja Priyadarsi had three main objects in view. First, the abolition of the slaughter of animals, whether for food or sacrifice. Secondly, the establishment of medical dispensaries throughout the empire. Thirdly, the introduction of a state system of instruction in moral conduct.

Prohibition of the slaughter of animals.

Kindness to animals is an important element in the religion of the edicts. It was perhaps the development of that deeply-rooted belief in the metempsychosis, which fondly imagines that every living thing is animated by a soul that once was human. When this belief becomes a conviction, the eating of flesh meat must seem to the believer to be akin to cannibalism. It is strange that this feeling finds so little expression in the legend of Gótama; on the contrary, Gótama is said to have died in consequence of having eaten too much pork. But it is easy to infer from the edicts that the legend of his biography was compiled in a later and corrupt age of Buddhism, and cannot be accepted as a faithful picture of his life and teaching. Be this as it may, Raja Priyadarsi was no monk. He was a philanthropist of a practical stamp, and imbued with a deep love of animal beings. Probably he had eaten flesh meat from his boyhood, without a thought of the nature of the animal he was eating, or of the misery which was inflicted to procure his daily meal. Like other Hindú sovereigns he had also performed sacrifices of animals to the gods, without a thought of the death to which the creature was subjected. But when he realized the pain and suffering caused by such butchery, his heart seems to have revolted from flesh, in the same way that a woman revolts from the idea of eating a pet lamb or bird. Accordingly he promulgated an edict, in which he prohibited all slaughter of animals, whether for food or sacrifice, because of the cruelty which it involved. He also announced that the daily slaughter of animals in the royal kitchen would be discontinued for the future. In the same edict he prohibited all convivial meetings on the ground that much evil attended such assemblies.[5]

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[4] See Tablets ix. and xi. in Appendix I.

Perhaps no despotic order has been issued, since

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[4] See Tablet i. in Appendix I.

Result of the edict.

the first establishment of a civil government, which was so calculated to create a profound impression. The Bráhmans, however abstemious in their own diet, had sacrificed animals, and poured out libations to the gods, from immemorial antiquity. The Kshatriyas were equally celebrated as warriors and hunters, and had lived on meat and wine from their earliest history. The edict was thus directed against the daily worship of the Bráhmans and the daily pursuits and daily meals of the Kshatriyas; whilst it was based upon broad principles of benevolence, which neither priest nor soldier could be expected to understand. The Bráhman would never regard his sacrificial knife as an instrument of cruelty; nor was the Kshatriya likely to desist from the sports of the field, or to abstain from his ancient flesh feasts, because of the pain they might inflict on the antelope or wild boar.

Failure of the edict.

The promulgation of the first edict against the slaughter of animals thus appears to have been a failure. The general population of the Gangetic valley might possibly have received it with indifference, for they had subsisted on grain and vegetables for unrecorded ages; but still they had always sacrificed animals to the gods, and especially to the female deities who were supposed to revel in flesh meat and strong liquors.[6]

Enforcement of the edict by an imperial demonstration.

The Raja, however, was not to be thwarted in his benevolent intentions by the opposition or disaffection of unbelievers. He repeated the edict in another form, and promulgated it with all the pomp and ceremony of an imperial demonstration. This time it was not associated with the decree against convivial entertainments, but placed foremost amongst those precepts of duty which had received universal recognition. Again, it was not issued as an ordinary decree, but surrounded with all the emblems of power and authority that would excite universal reverence, and ensure universal obedience. Magnificent spectacles were exhibited at every important station throughout the empire, such as the people had not witnessed for centuries. There were grand processions of elephants and chariots, accompanied by imposing displays of rich and costly articles, and winding up with fire-works and illuminations. Vast assemblages of people were thus gathered together in orderly but overwhelming multitudes, such as are still to be witnessed at the great Indian festivals. The drums were beaten and proclamation was made by a special messenger from the sovereign. "Thus saith the Raja:[7] —'Animals are not to be sacrificed, living creatures are not to be put to death, kinsfolk are to be kindly regarded, Bráhmans and Srámans are to be respected and reverenced, fathers and mothers are to be dutifully served, and spiritual pastors are to be received with filial veneration: By these righteous observances the religion of the heaven-beloved Raja will flourish throughout the world; and under his sons, and his grandsons, and his great-grandsons, it will prosper throughout all generations: It is the ordinance of duty and should be as stable as a mountain: Let every virtuous man obey it: Let no man think of opposing it: The law which directs ceremonial rites must conform to the ordinance of duty.' "[8]

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[6] See the vows of Sítá to the goddesses of the Ganges and Jumna rivers, *ante*, page 47.

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[7] The name of the Raja, and his appellation of "heaven-beloved" or "beloved of the gods," is repeated in every edict.

Significance of the prohibition.

Raja Priyadarsi is perhaps the first sovereign on record who authoritatively declared that the national religion must conform to justice and humanity. Gótama Buddha had already brought his monastic teaching into conformity with moral duty by prohibiting sons to enter upon monastic vows without the consent of their parents. But Raja Priyadarsi aimed a mortal blow at the old Brahmanical ritual by asserting that the sacrifice of animals was contrary to humanity. In enforcing this decree he did not appeal to any religious sentiment, such as precludes the Bráhman from eating beef, or the Mussulman from eating pork. He did not refer to the dogma of the metempsychosis, which taught that animals were mere embodiments of human souls. He did not even prohibit animal food, but only the slaughter of the animal.[9] But the force of the appeal to humanity against the bloody ritual was irresistible. A powerful antagonism was excited which lasted for ages; but in the end humanity triumphed over the Bráhman and the Kshatriya. In the present day animal sacrifices have almost passed away from

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[8] See Appendix, Tablet iv. The paraphrase will appear somwehat free if it is only compared with Professor Wilson's translation of Tablet iv.; but it will be found in perfect conformity with the real meaning of the inscription as exhibited in Professor Wilson's comments on the original text of the edict. See Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, vol. xii., page 180. Speaking of the last sentence, Professor Wilson says that it is intended to raise moral duty above ceremonial rites.

[9] This point has already been discussed, see *ante*, page 142.

It is curious to notice the contrast between the practical working of the Buddhist commandment against slaughter, and that against getting drunk. Although killing is forbidden, the Buddhist may still eat meat, provided the animal has been killed by another, or has died a natural or accidental death. But the law against getting drunk is treated as a prohibition against all intoxicating liquors and drugs.

India; they have been superseded by the more innocent offerings of rice and milk, butter and cakes, such as the ancient Rishis presented to the gods of the elements.[10] In like manner the royal and imperial sacrifices of the Rajasúya and Aswamedha have disappeared from the land; and although the love of the chase is still as strong in the Kshatriya as in days of yore, yet the national sentiment of the Hindú is opposed to the idea of slaughter of any living thing.[11]

Medical establishments for men and animals.

The edict for the establishment of medical dispensaries or hospitals is of a still more remarkable character. It is the expression of an enlightened morality, which is a lesson for all time. It is the embodiment of that practical benevolence, which cares for the body as well as for the soul. The Raja saw with that true philanthropy which grows out of the religion of the affections, that health is as essential to happiness as spiritual culture; and accordingly, whilst seeking to inculcate religion or Dharma, he provided the means for removing disease and pain from the temple of the body. Here, again, his loving-kindness was not confined to the human race, but extended over the entire range of animal being. Mr Prinsep alludes to it as the fastidious humanity of the Buddhist creed; but the alleviation of agony in animals, especially in those who minister to man, is something more than fastidious humanity. To bind a broken limb, to anoint a wound, to bring a draught of water to a sick animal, will often elicit more gratitude from the dumb creature, than from beings gifted with speech and reason. The fact that the cure of disease formed a part of the ancient religion of Buddha, has already been indicated by Megasthenes, who describes the physicians as forming an honourable class of the Srámans, or Buddhist mendicants.

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[10] In Bengal goats and kids are still sacrificed to the goddess Kalí or Durgá.

[11] The antagonism of the Bráhmans to the milder precepts of Buddhism could scarcely have found much expression during the reign of a tolerant sovereign like Raja Priyadarsi. The author of the Vishnu Purána, which was composed in the age of Brahmanical revival, is exceedingly bitter against the Buddhists and Jains, who had seduced the people from their ancient sacrifices and sraddhas. (See Book iii. chap. xviii.) The transition from animal sacrifices to the bloodless offerings of rice and milk is fully indicated in the Rámáyana. See History, vol. ii., part iv., Rámáyana, chap. ii.

Character of the edict.

It is impossible, however, to ascertain how far the labours of these Srámans were systematized by Raja Priyadarsi. The edict simply directed that a constant supply of medicinal roots and fruits should be kept in store in every part of his empire; one class for the treatment of human beings, and the other class for the treatment of animals.[12] This benevolent measure was also extended to all the provinces which had been conquered by Raja Priyadarsi; as well as to the Bactrian kingdom of Antiochus the Greek, with whom the Raja appears to have been in alliance. It was further enacted that wherever such a provision had not been made, the necessary roots and fruits were to be planted. In the same edict the Raja commanded that wells should be dug and trees planted on every high road throughout his empire, for the accommodation of animals as well as for that of man.[13]

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[12] See *infra* for Fah-Hian's account of these hospitals at Patali-putra.

[13] See Tablet ii. in Appendix 1. The conservative character of Hindú institutions may be inferred from the fact that there existed at Surat down to the last century a hospital specially set apart for the treatment of animals. It has been frequently described by European travellers, and was known as the Banyan Hospital; but nothing of it has been reported subsequent to the year 1780. In that year it consisted of a large piece of ground, enclosed by high walls, and subdivided into several courts or wards for the accommodation of

State system of moral instruction.

The edicts promulgated by Raja Priyadarsi, for establishing a system of moral instruction throughout his empire, are somewhat obscure.[14] In one he complains that the chief ministers of morality had been "tolerant of iniquity;" and it may be assumed that by the term "iniquity" he alluded to the flesh sacrifices of the Bráhmans, and the flesh feasts and banquetings of the Kshatriyas. Accordingly he announces that he has appointed other ministers to mingle freely with all classes, with Kshatriyas and Bráhmans, as well as with mendicants and poor people,[15] for the purpose of presiding over morals, and rewarding the good and punishing the wicked.[16]

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animals. In sickness they were attended with the greatest care, and here found what is wanted by many human beings, namely, a peaceful asylum for the infirmities of old age. When an animal broke a limb, or was otherwise disabled, his owner brought it to this hospital, where it was received without regard to the caste or nation of its master. In 1772 this hospital contained horses, mules, oxen, sheep, goats, monkeys, poultry, pigeons, and a variety of birds; also an aged tortoise, which was known to have been there seventy-five years. The most extraordinary ward was that appropriated for rats, mice, bugs, and other noxious vermin, for whom suitable food was provided (Hamilton's East India Gazetteer, *art.* Surat).

It would be difficult for the European to understand the inducement which would lead men to contribute towards the support of such an extraordinary institution whilst so many human beings were unprovided for. But the dogma of the metempsychosis undoubtedly exercises a deep influence when the belief becomes a conviction; and the doctrine would induce large numbers to purchase future happiness by such an affectation of charity.

[14] See Tablets v. and vi. in Appendix I.

[15] The term mendicants or "Bhikshus," does not appear to be applied to ordinary beggars, but to the religious mendicants, such as the Srámans. In the legend of the life of Gótama Buddha, the great teacher is often represented as addressing his priests by the simple term of "Bhikshus" or mendicants.

[16] In the original edict, which will be found in the Appendix (Tablet v.), will be found some geographical allusions, which suggest the idea that Raja Priyadarsi sent out missionaries to neighbouring countries. It is difficult to identify precisely the names of countries, but the missionaries seem to have been directed to proceed in a westerly direction into Guzerat; and also towards the north-west through Cashmere and Cabul, "to the outer cities and fastnesses of my brother and sister, and wherever there are any other of my kindred." By this last expression the edict seems to allude to the dominions of the Greek princes of Bactria. See Appendix II., Buddhist Chronicles.

In the second edict he seems to imply that he had invested these ministers or missionaries with inquisitorial and magisterial powers, similar to those which were exercised by the political inspectors described by Megasthenes.

Opposition to Raja Priyadarsi.

These edicts appear to indicate that 'a spirit of antagonism was already at work against the Raja and his religion. He had, in fact, shared the fate of all reformers, who seek to impart religious instruction to the masses without the aid of the established priesthood He had endeavoured to conciliate Bráhmans and Srámans by enjoining the duty of paying them respect and supporting them with alms; but he had offended the Bráhmans by his edicts against animal sacrifices, and he had not as yet recommended himself to the Srámans by recognizing the law of the wheel. Above all he had ignored the authority of both Bráhmans and Srámans as teachers of religion, and had, moreover, indicated that they too were wanting in a knowledge of Dharma. It is easy to conceive that by adopting such an attitude he would excite the wrath of every priest and monk throughout the land. He would probably learn from his inspectors that loud murmurs were to be heard in all directions respecting the oppressive character of the new ordinances; and in the first instance he would be doubtless angry at such groundless complaints, and more determined than ever to enforce obedience to his commands.[17] Under such circumstances he is said to have declared that he had not required his subjects to perform anything that he did not perform himself; and that consequently there would be no real difficulty in obeying his edicts.[18] At the same time he announced his resolution to enforce obedience. For this purpose he had appointed officers to punish all those who departed from his ordinances. The tribunal thus set up partook of the nature of an Inquisition; but it was evidently intended for the punishment of evil conduct only, and not for the purpose of checking false doctrine or heresy of any kind.[19]

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[17] It is evident from the spirit of the edicts that the chief opposition to the ordinances of Raja Priyadarsi arose from those who desired to slaughter animals for sacrifice or food. This is especially evident even in the confused rendering of Tablet xiii. as given in the Appendix I.

Conciliatory edicts.

The remaining edicts are more conciliatory in their tone and character. The Raja seems to have failed, as might have been expected, in the task of compelling his subjects to become virtuous by imperial authority; and like some modern philanthropists, he appears to have been somewhat disconcerted by the result. Accordingly he attempted to set himself right with his subjects by appealing to the piety of his own life as compared with that of the Rajas who reigned before him. He says:—" In ancient times my predecessors on the throne took their pleasure in travelling, in society, in hunting and other similar amusements; but my delight has been in almsgiving and visits to the Bráhmans and Srámans, and in rewarding the learned and the aged; in overseeing the country and the people; in promulgating moral laws and enforcing moral conduct."[20] Other edicts are of a similar character, but seem to offer considerable difficulties in the way of intelligible translation.[21] It is evident, however, that the sovereign, whilst endeavouring to spread his own religion, was willing to tolerate the religion of others, and to praise all benevolent and virtuous acts even when practised by heretics. He honoured all forms of faith, and presented gifts to all holy men, whether monastic celibates or priestly householders; but he considered that there was no gift like that of virtue or Dharma. He especially gloried in the fact that his edicts effected conversions wherever they were set up. "It is a conquest," he says, "that ensures joy, and becomes a joy: The victory of Dharma is the only true happiness, and cannot be overcome."[22]

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[18] This point is rather dubious. It is so stated in the original rendering of Edict vi. by Mr Prinsep; but it finds no place in the revised translation by Professor Wilson.

[19] It will be seen hereafter that the two Chinese pilgrims, Fah-Hian and Hiouen-Thsang, testify to the fact that neglect of duties to parents and religious teachers was punished in the fifth and seventh centuries by mutilation and exile.

Vitality of Dharma as the religion of loving-kindness.

Such was the good and kindly teaching of Raja Priyadarsi. This virtuous sovereign had gloried in the idea that his religion of Dharma would prosper throughout all generations, and endure as long as the mountains; and, practically, his aspirations have been realized. The religion of the heart has been struggling through unrecorded ages beneath the dead weight of an ecclesiastical system which ignores the affections, and the corrupt influence of a sacred literature which overrides morality. But such is the vitality of the doctrine of loving-kindness, that it still reigns supreme amidst the wreck of ancient creeds and expiring mythologies. The edicts have long since faded out of the national memory, but they were engraven not only on rock and pillar, but on the hearts of the masses. In India the further development of Dharma has been repressed by Brahmanical observances, and the people are still distributed by caste distinctions into isolated groups; but within the little circle of family, village, caste, or neighbourhood, the religion flourishes to an extent which is without a parallel elsewhere. To this day the Hindús are beyond all other people in the world in dutiful service to father and mother, in kindness and kindly help towards kinsfolk and acquaintance, in filial veneration towards spiritual pastors, in respectful service towards Bráhmans and holy men, in frugality and temperance, in abstinence from evil-speaking and slandering, and in a tender regard for the whole animal creation. In Buddhist countries[23] the duty of obedience to parents is less observed, and the virtue of benevolence loses its vitality from being regarded as a religious merit to be rewarded hereafter; but the duties of kindness and hospitality are more manifest, because they are not blunted by Brahmanical rapacity, or narrowed down by caste laws, and consequently have developed into a universal rule. Indeed Dharma has become almost identical with Buddhism. The traveller, whether a Burman or a foreigner, is always sure of a hospitable reception in a Buddhist monastery. Again, a system of instruction, such as was perhaps originally inaugurated by Raja Priyadarsi, is still in force in every vihára throughout Burma; and whether in British or native territory, it is difficult to find a Burman lad of the poorest parents who cannot read and write. Moreover the spirit of religious toleration which was expressed by Raja Priyadarsi, seems always to have prevailed both in India and Burma. Violation of caste rules within the pale of Brahmanism, and schism or heresy within the pale of Buddhism, may have been suppressed by excommunication or capital punishment in times gone by; but Jews and Christians, Mussulmans and Parsees, have always enjoyed the liberty of performing worship after their own fashion, without any interference whatever from the civil or ecclesiastical powers, provided always that no offence was given to the religion of the state.

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[20] See Appendix. Tablet viii.

[21] See Appendix, Tablets vii., xii., xiii., and xiv.

[22] Tablet xiii.

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[23] The author's personal experience of Buddhist countries is confined to Burma.

Association of Dharma with Buddhism: degeneration of monastic Buddhism.

This modern association of Dharma with Buddhism was not the result of monastic teaching, for theoretically the two systems are still as widely separated as they were in the days of Raja Priyadarsi. Dharma, or religion, cultivated the duties of the affections; Vináya, or monastic discipline, crushed out the affections themselves. Dharma taught that the fulfilment of duty to fellow-men and fellow-creatures in every scale of being was the only true road to happiness. Vináya taught that happiness itself is a delusion, and that the main object of the truly wise ought to be to abstract themselves from all duty and all affection, until the soul was freed from every mortal tie and practically ceased to be. But in the same way that Brahmanism has been compelled to accept the worship of the gods as practised by the conquerors and the conquered, so Buddhism has been compelled to accept the religion of Priyadarsi as taught in the edicts. From a very early date, probably during the period which intervened between the promulgation of the edicts and the compilation of the chronicles, Buddhist monasticism must have been fast losing its ancient energy. The medical Srámans and the missionary Srámans, who are both so clearly described by Megasthenes, were virtually passing away from the Buddhist world; and the system of primary education, which is imparted in the monasteries to boys, is perhaps the last relic that remains of the vast philanthropic reforms which filled the imagination of the heaven-beloved Raja. In a word, from an early period the Buddhist monks must have degenerated. They led lives of celibacy in order that they might lead lives of religious idleness, maintained by the voluntary contributions of the laity, and surrounded by the halo of false glory with which superstition loves to invest such saintly characters.[24] Their vaunted learning has been little more than metaphysical speculation, in which ignorance of the universe and its inhabitants has been concealed under an affectation of profound knowledge that is drawn from the imagination alone. Nowhere is the real truth so plainly depicted as in the so-called Buddhist chronicles. There the dim memories of the past are reproduced in the garb of fable; and the want of historical data is supplied by puerile inventions.[25]

The reign of Raja Priyadarsi is a valuable

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[24] The unpractical character of monastic Buddhism is especially observant in Burma, for there it can be easily compared with the daily labours and self-denying lives of Roman Catholic priests and missionaries which are above all praise.

[25] The Buddhist chronicles profess to furnish historical details of the reigns of successive Rajas of Magadha from the death of Gótama Buddha in B.C. 543 to the end of the reign of Asoka in B.C. 288. They also give an account of three synods or convocations, which were held at different intervals during the same period, for the purpose of establishing the Buddhist canon of scriptures, and maintaining the rules of monastic discipline. As they involve much historical criticism, and are devoid of general interest, it has been deemed advisable to discuss them in the Appendix at the end of the present volume.

Priyadarsi identified with Asoka.

landmark in the annals of ancient India. He is generally identified with the Asoka of the chronicles; and for the future may be termed Asoka.[26] The age which preceded his reign is the twilight of Hindú history. Villages were established further and further in the deep forest, and grouped into kingdoms by conquering Rajas. Vedic Rishis and Kshatriya warriors, Brahman priests and Buddhist monks, appear respectively upon the stage, and begin to assume substantive forms. It is even possible to realize the growth of civil government. The headmen of villages holding their noisy little councils of grey-beards under the shade of widely-spreading trees; the Rajas sitting in state upon their thrones; the royal umbrella elevated above their heads, and the chamaras of hair waving to and fro; whilst chieftains and ministers are sitting around in the council hall. Here and there, mingling with every throng, may be seen the half-naked Bráhmans with their sacred thread, and the decent Srámans in the yellow robes of the monastery. But one age is jumbled up with another, for there is no chronology. The imagination wanders at will over the shifting sands of a remote past, but cannot fix a single reign or even a single century. Delhi may be coeval with Damascus; the Rajas of Ayodhyá with the priest-kings of Salem. Even the stand-point furnished by the life of Gótama Buddha is altogether insecure. It has been fixed in the sixth century before the Christian era; but it might, with nearly equal probability, be thrust back another hundred or even thousand years. The so-called chronicles of the kings of Magadha, between Gótama and Alexander the Great, Vimbasara and Asoka, are little better than jumbles of myths and names.[27] The invasion of the Punjab by Alexander in B. C. 327,—the charge of the Macedonian cavalry against the elephants of Porus on the banks of the Jhelum,—is the first event which brings India into historical relations with the outer world. It was followed, perhaps immediately, but certainly within less than a hundred years, by the reign of Asoka; the great sovereign of Magadha, who has, as it were, left his handwriting upon rock and pillar from Cuttack to Guzerat and Cabul, and whose memory is still lingering in Sanskrit and Pali story.[28]

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[26] The identification of Raja Priyadarsi of the edicts with Raja Asoka of the Buddhist chronicles was first pointed out by Mr Turnour, who rested it upon a passage in the Dipawanse. The late Professor H. H. Wilson objected to this identification (see Journal of the Asiatic Society, vol. xii. page 243). The identification, however, is further proved by the general resemblance between the edicts of Priyadarsi and the legends of Asoka recorded in the Buddhist chronicles. See Appendix II. to the present volume.

Misty age preceding Asoka.

The early life of Asoka is almost lost in a cloud of legend; but here and there glimpses are obtained which prove that he was a prince, who had passed through extraordinary adventures and large experiences. Whilst still a very young man he was at variance with his father, and seems to have gone into exile like another Ráma.[29] He is said to have been appointed to the government of the distant province of Ujain, and subsequently to have suppressed a revolt in Taxila in the Punjab. During his wanderings he fell in love with a beautiful princess, named Devi, by whom he became the father of a son and a daughter, who were famous in later Buddhist tradition as the missionaries who first planted Buddhism in the island of Ceylon.[30]

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[27] See Appendix II., Buddhist Chronicles.

[28] Compare Vishnu Purána, Book IV., chap. xxiv., with Mahawanso, chap. v., &c.

[29] The fact of the exile is a little uncertain. In the Buddhist chronicle he is said to have been appointed governor of Ujain, in the southern part of Rajpootana, not far from the river Nerbudda; but the appointment to so remote a province may have been equivalent to exile, and probably was a pious invention of the monkish chronicler to cover the disgrace of exile, and to represent Asoka as the son of the Raja who preceded him on the throne. The Chinese traveller, Hiouen-Thsang, relates that Asoka established at Ujain a place of punishment, which was called Hell, because criminals were subjected to the same tortures in this life to which the wicked are subjected. The story proves nothing, and is

Asoka and Sandrokottos compared.

The main incidents of Asoka's early career thus present a strange similarity to those recorded of Sandrokottos by Greek writers. Sandrokottos was also an exiled prince from Patali-putra; and he ultimately drove the Greeks from Taxila. Again, Asoka usurped a throne and founded an empire; so did Sandrokottos. Asoka originally professed the Brahmanical religion, and then embraced the more practical religion of the edicts. Sandrokottos sacrificed to the gods in Brahmanical fashion; but he also held a great assembly every year, in which every discovery was discussed which was likely to prove beneficial to the earth, to mankind, or to animals generally. There is no necessity, perhaps, for laying an undue stress upon this resemblance; but still it would be a startling coincidence if the great sovereign, whose religion of duty without deity has been engraven for more than twenty centuries on the rocks and pillars of India, should prove to be the same prince who met Alexander at Taxila, who offended the

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probably a monkish legend. Such stories of Buddhist saints may be edifying to pious Buddhists, but are worthless to the historian. Fah-Hian relates a somewhat similar story. See chap. xxxii., Beale's Translation.

[30] The brother and sister are respectively named Mahendra and Sanghamitrá. The story of their mission, surrounded with the usual halo of pious fable, may be found in the Mahawanso, chap. v.

Macedonian conqueror by his insolence and assumption, who expelled the Greeks from the Punjab during the wars of Alexander's successors, and ultimately married the daughter of Seleukos Nikator.

Asoka's accession to the throne of Magadha.

The accession of Asoka to the throne was signalized by a terrible tragedy, which is only briefly indicated in Buddhist tradition. The old Raja, his alleged father, was mortally sick in the royal palace at Patali-putra. The dying sovereign sent for his eldest son Susíma, who commanded in the Punjab, to succeed him on the throne. Asoka, however, appeared in the stead of his elder brother; and the Raja was so exasperated that he burst a blood-vessel and perished on the spot. Asoka is said to have had a hundred brothers, and to have slain them all save one. The statement is probably a myth, but it sufficiently indicates the perpetration of one of those wholesale massacres which are of frequent occurrence in dynastic revolutions in Asiatic kingdoms. Susíma was certainly slain, and his death was followed by an incident, which imparts a darker colouring to the tragedy. The lowest class of people in all Hindustan are the Chandálas. Their touch, their breath, their very presence, is pollution. They are scavengers and executioners, and they live like lepers in separate villages. When prince Susíma was murdered, his widow was about to become a mother; but she succeeded in effecting her escape from the palace, and found a refuge in a village of the Chandálas, where she gave birth to a son, and dwelt for seven years. The princess and her misfortunes have passed into oblivion, but the untold agony of her residence amongst the Chandálas is a lasting blot upon the character of Asoka. Strangely enough, her son is said to have become a monk, and to have converted Asoka to the Buddhist faith. This startling story is not altogether impossible. The ill-fated prince, the grandson of a Raja, brought up amongst Chandálas, had no other career open to him but that of a religious mendicant; and he was doubtless glad to forget his sorrows in the seclusion of a monastery. That he should have ultimately effected the conversion of his usurping uncle is a pious legend, upon which it is impossible to pronounce an opinion.[31]

Conversion of Asoka.

An unknown interval of some years elapses between the accession and the conversion of Asoka. During the early portion of this interval, whilst the widowed princess and her infant son were still dwelling amongst the Chandálas, Asoka was pursuing a career of conquest resembling that of Sandrokottos. The extent of his empire is indicated by his edicts. It took in the whole of Hindustan, the Punjab, and Affghanistan, from the Bay of Bengal to the Indian Ocean, and from the river Nerbudda to the mountains of Cashmere. His frontier on the north-west was formed by the western Himalayas, known as the Hindú Kúsh, which rendered his empire conterminous with that of the Greek sovereigns of Bactria. Here, in the neighbourhood of the Hindú Kúsh and the Oxus, were doubtless to be found the outer cities and fastnesses of his so-called brother and sister of the dynasty of the Seleukidæ.[32]

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[31] Mahawanso, chap. v., et seq.

[32] Appendix I., Edicts of Asoka, Tablet v.

Secular character of Asoka: fear of treachery, love of women and the chase.

The secular character of Asoka may be inferred from that of Sandrokottos; for even if they are to be regarded as two distinct individuals, it is certain that they are men of the same stamp, the same culture, and the same surroundings. Sandrokottos was in such constant fear of treachery that he never slept in the day time, and frequently changed his bed-chamber at night; and the same may be inferred of Asoka, who had ascended the throne by the murder of all his brethren, and must have been threatened by enemies of every kind. Sandrokottos was devoted to the pleasures of the harem, and the same may be inferred of Asoka; for whilst there is an allusion in the Buddhist chronicle to the sixteen thousand women of his palace, and to his fondness for a hand-maid in his old age,[33] there is throughout the edicts a significant absence of all reference to those sensual indulgences which were the characteristics of the age.[34] Sandrokottos went out occasionally to hunt with his women; and Asoka may have done the same, for in his edicts he refers to the pleasures of hunting, travelling, and marriage. Again, both sovereigns resided in the vast city of Patali-putra, with its wooden walls manned with archers, and its open moat which served both as a means of defence and a common sewer, and must have occasioned much pestilence and fever, especially under the alternate conditions of an Indian sun and Indian rains.

It is however the religious phase in the character

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[33] Mahawanso, pages 27, 122.

[34] The lax morality of the age is proved by the reference to courtesans in the life of Gótama Buddha and the Sanskrit drama. It is also reflected in the sculptures at Sanchi and Amravati. See the valuable photographs in Mr Fergusson's Tree and Serpent Worship.

Religious character of Asoka.

of Asoka which is invested with the deepest interest. Indeed, the process must always be worthy of study which could transform a usurper and murderer into a philanthropist imbued with the proselytizing spirit of Buddhism. In the early years of his reign he was in the constant practice of almsgiving and sacrifice. According to the Buddhist chronicle he fed sixty thousand Bráhmans daily.[35] According to the edicts he daily sacrificed hundreds of thousands of animals for "virtuous purposes." [36] These statements are probably exaggerations, but they are precisely similar to the stories which are still told of wealthy Hindú sinners.[37] Almsgiving and sacrifice have been regarded as expiations for sin from the earliest age of Brahmanical teaching; and when the excitement of revolution and conquest had begun to subside, it was only natural that Asoka should endeavour to expiate his sins after the old conventional fashion.

Change of spiritual nature: revolt at sacrifice.

It was at this period of his career that the spiritual nature of Asoka underwent an entire change. The man of violence and slaughter shuddered at the sight of blood and suffering. The usurper and murderer doubted the justice which demanded that innocent animals should be slain for the expiation of his own crimes. Nor was this revulsion of feeling confined to Asoka; it was the growing public opinion of the age. The revolt of humanity against sacrifices found a still more indignant expression in the language of the Hebrew prophets than in the

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[35] See Appendix II.

[36] See Appendix I., Edicts of Asoka, Tablet i.

[37] This is especially the case in Bengal, where goats and kids are still sacrificed by thousands to the goddess Kalí or Durgá.

Religious character of Asoka.

edicts of the Hindú Raja :—"I have desired mercy and not sacrifice; the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings."[38] The conversion of Asoka, however, was not effected in a moment. The oscillation of sentiment finds full expression in the confused language of the first edict. But when he had fairly accepted the idea he was agitated by no further hesitation. Henceforth he was bent on expiating his sins by his own merits; by the fulfilment of duty rather than by austerities or sacrifices; by the accumulation of good works rather than by the slaughter of goats and lambs.

Zealous promulgation of Dharma.

The energy which had enabled Asoka to usurp a throne and conquer an empire was now expended in promulgating the religion of duty. In fact, his zeal seems in some respects to have outrun his discretion. He devoted himself heart and soul to the performance of merits, and to compelling others to perform merits. He not only abolished the slaughter of animals, but he provided for the medical treatment of those which were wounded or diseased. He set aside the established teachers, who had been tolerant of iniquity, and appointed teachers of his own with magisterial powers to enforce the fulfilment of duty. The great yearly assembly of Sandrokottos finds no direct expression in the edicts, but it is in perfect accordance with all the measures which were established by the edicts. It is not an outgrowth of Brahmanical ritualism, nor of the Buddhist law of the wheel, but of Dharma, and Dharma alone.

Absence of deity in Dharma.

But the religion of Asoka, with all its practical morality, was wanting in that spiritual life which is associated with a consciousness of deity. Virtue was practised, not merely because it was right, but for the sake of reward; vice was eschewed, not merely because it was wrong, but from fear of punishment. To this day there is much spontaneous goodness amongst Buddhists; but still there is much that springs from a recognition of the law of merits and demerits, rather than from a pure love for our fellow-creatures. In a word, the conception of deity is wanting; and without deity there can be no heroism and no devotion. The idea of God loving man, and that of man loving God, are essential to the religion of humanity.

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[38] Hosea vi. 6. Compare also Micah vi. 6, 7; Isaiah i. 10—14.

Drift from Brahmanism to Buddhism.

The remaining history of Asoka is utterly lost, beyond the bare fact that in drifting further and further from Brahmanism, he at last avowed himself a convert to Buddhism, and embraced the three gems—Buddha, the Law, and the Assembly. The circumstances which attended this final profession of faith are unknown. Nothing has been preserved beyond a single inscription, addressed apparently to the Buddhist assembly of monks at Magadha, in which he declares that he accepts all the precepts of Buddha, and requires them to be regarded as law.[39] It will be seen, however, that he does not recognize the law of the wheel, or in any way express his approbation of monastic vows. Asoka, however, is celebrated in all Buddhist countries as the liberal builder of numerous vihàras for the accommodation of Srámans, and especially for the construction of very many stupas, or memorial towers of Gótama Buddha.[40] According to the Buddhist chronicle he died in the year B.C. 288, at the age of eighty-two.

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[39] See the Bhadra inscription in Appendix I., Edicts of Asoka.

[40] It is not impossible that Asoka was the first king who erected memorial

Death of Asoka, B.C. 288.

Interval of seven centuries after Asoka.

The death of Asoka was followed by a blank of seven centuries. From B.C. 300 to A.D. 400 the valley of the Ganges was teeming with population; but they seem to have lived on from generation to generation, untouched and unchanged by the influences at work in the outer world. Dynastic revolutions may have agitated courts, but they had no effect upon the masses. The development of Buddhism may have imparted a new religious colouring to the people, but otherwise the national life was unchanged.

Isolated historical notices, B.C. 300 to A.D. 400.

The historical notices of India during this long interval may be briefly expressed. In the second century before the Christian era the Greek sovereigns of Bactria had been pushed further and further south by the Tochari Scythians, and had finally disappeared from the scene. Shortly before the commencement of the Christian era, Kanishka, the famous Buddhist king of the Yuchi, or Tochari Scythians, established an empire over Affghanistan, the Punjab, Rajpootana, and the upper valleys of the Jumna and Ganges, and then disappeared like the Greeks. The annals of India during this period have shrivelled into names. Ghosts of ancient Hindú sovereigns may be summoned upon the stage of history; but they appear as bloodless spectres of the past. Vikramaditya defeated the Tochari Scythians, and left his era of B.C. 56, which is still maintained throughout Hindustan. Saliváhána ap-

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towers for the reception of sacred relics. Arrian states decidedly that the Hindús allowed no monuments to be reared in honour of deceased persons (India, chap. x.). It has already been indicated that the stupas said to have been erected by Gótama Buddha were mythical. See *ante*, page 140.

CHAPTER V.

pears as the champion of the Bráhmans against the Buddhists, and has left his era of A.D. 77, which is still maintained throughout the Dekkan.[41] The Sáh kings reigned at Guzerat, and the Gupta kings reigned at Magadha. Future discoveries may breathe a new life into these dry bones of history; but until then the dynasties of Indian kings are of little more moment to the historian of humanity than the half-forgotten lists of old Egyptian Pharaohs.[42] Greek culture left no impression on the life of the Hindús; it is to be traced only in the ruins of the past. Scythian culture is discernible amongst the Rajpoots; but the fact leads to no certain historical inferences. Merchants came from the east and west, and carried away traditions of Bráhman priests and Buddhist monks;[43] but India continued to live in a world of her own, and cared nothing for the ideas or the people that came from beyond the seas.[44]

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[41] The ancient wars between Aryans and Scythians are probably historical. The struggle, however, has also been symbolized into an antagonism between the Bráhmans and Buddhists, which apparently belongs to a much later period.

[42] Archæologists are the pioneers of history, and there are many who will occupy a lasting place in the history of historical research, although their labours are not as yet available to the historian. Mr Thomas's essay on the dynasty of the Sáh kings of Suráshtra is a model of laborious research and careful criticism. See Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, vol. xii., p. 1.

[43] About A.D. 200 Clemens of Alexandria describes both Bráhmans and Srámans. "The Bráhmans," he says, "are worshippers of Herakles and Pan; whilst the Srámans and Srámanás [i. e. Buddhist monks and nuns] worship certain pyramids, which they believe to contain the bones of some god." This description is sufficiently accurate. Herakles and Pan were identical with Vishnu and Siva; and the bones worshipped in pyramids are the relics preserved as honoured memorials of Gótama Buddha and his more famous disciples. Porphyry, who flourished about A.D. 300, furnishes more details. "The Bráhmans," he says, "form a family or tribe; the Srámans are a mixture of all classes. The Srámans shave their heads and wear tunics; and abandon their families and property to live in colleges outside the city walls. They spend their time in holy conversation, and receive daily doles of rice from the king." This account precisely agrees with that of the Chinese travellers, which is about to be brought under review.

[44] The colony of Syrian Christians in Malabar might seem to form an exception to this statement. But the Syrian Christians, like the Parsees of Bombay, have always existed as an isolated community.

Travels of Fah-Hian, A.D. 399—414.

At the commencement of the fifth century of the Christian era, whilst Alaric and his Goths were threatening imperial Rome, five Buddhist monks from China made their appearance in the Punjab. The event is in every way remarkable. The yellow-complexioned Chinese, with their broad heads, high cheek-bones, and small eyes, were probably not unfamiliar to the Hindús; and traders and seamen from the land of Han seem to have visited India from time immemorial. But the Chinese strangers in the Punjab appeared in a very different capacity. They were humble and sober-minded monks, warmly interested in Buddha and the law, and anxious for Buddhist scriptures and images, which they wished to copy and carry away to their own land.

Extension of Buddhism to China.

The extension of Buddhism to China is an interesting event in religious history. The missionaries of Asoka had been the pioneers of Buddhism in an age when Judæa was still governed by its own high-priest and Sanhedrim, and was busily engaged in rebuilding the temple and restoring the law. The zealous Srámans of Magadha had made their way from the Gangetic valley to the Punjab; thence through the Khyber Pass into Cabul; and finally carried the law of Buddha over the western Himalayas into the remote kingdoms of Turkistan and Mongolia. The story of these missionary operations is lost to the world.[45] Little is known beyond the significant fact that during the unrecorded centuries which followed the death of Asoka, the pure morality and monastic teaching of Gótama found their way into the heart of China, and laid a firm hold upon the active imaginations of Tartars and Chinese. The western world had been the theatre of the grandest events in the annals of man. Rome had completed the conquest of Italy, and grown into a colossal empire, which has left a heritage of history for all time. Christianity had been planted in Judæa and Galilee, and embraced by the Roman empire; and was already beginning to regenerate humanity. Meantime the religion of Buddha had spread from the Ganges to the Oxus and Jaxartes; and was still extending further and further beyond the northern slopes of the Himalayas towards the mountains of Altai.

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[45] See Appendix II., Buddhist Chronicles.

Isolation of Chinese Buddhism.

But the Buddhism of China was for centuries isolated from that of India. The intermediate region was one of the most difficult on the face of the earth. The passes of the Hindú Kúsh, the precipices of the mountains of Kashghar, and the terrors of the great desert of Gobi, were barriers to all general communication; whilst the intermittent wars between the Tartars and Chinese seem to have stopped the current of missionary operations. Meantime the Buddhist traditions had grown dim, and the teaching had become confused. Many Chinese Srámans were craving for more light and more knowledge. No Buddhist scriptures were procurable; and the precepts of monastic discipline, which had been preserved by oral communication, were imperfect and few. Some of the more zealous Srámans yearned to behold the holy land of Magadha, in which the glorious Buddha had preached the incomparable law; and to obtain, if possible, copies of the sacred books in the very localities in which they had been originally published abroad. A few made the attempt, and failed. Some perished in the great desert of Gobi. Others reached the country of the inhospitable Uigúrs, the Ogres of old romance, and were then compelled to return. At last the little band of five Srámans succeeded in surmounting every obstacle; and after a toilsome journey, which extended over five years, they found themselves in the Punjab, and prepared to make their way to the holy land of Magadha, where Gótama Buddha had taught and preached in days of old.

Character of Fah-Hian.

The leader of that little band was one of those unknown heroes in the history of humanity, whose memories have for ages died out of the world, but who are yet deserving of a permanent place on the rolls of fame. His name was Fah-Hian. He was a native of Tchang'an, in northern China; a city which was formerly the capital of the province of Shense. His fervent faith and pious humility find expression in every page of the narrative of his travels; whilst his energy of character, and indomitable zeal for the purity of the law, is proved by the fact that he was the only one of the five Srámans who succeeded in effecting the object of his mission.[46]

March from China to India: the desert of Gobi.

The march of Fah-Hian and his companions from China to India was a marvel of indomitable energy. In one respect they had an advantage over all other travellers. Buddhism flourished more or less throughout the whole intermediate region; and the yellow robes of the Sráman were not only a sufficient protection from robbers, but secured from the rich and powerful an ample supply of such simple necessaries as were required on the way. The great desert of Gobi was the first serious obstacle which the pilgrims encountered. It has indeed been the terror of all later travellers, from Marco Polo downwards. The dreary waste was supposed to be haunted by demons. The sirocco winds blew so fiercely over the sands that not a beast or a bird could be seen. As far as the eye could reach there was nothing but desert, strewed here and there with the blanched bones of men who had perished by the way. But after seventeen days of toil and anxiety they passed in safety through the perilous solitudes, and once more found themselves amongst the habitations of man.[47]

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[46] Pilgrimage of Fah-Hian; from the French edition of the Foe koue ki of MM. Remusat, Klaproth, and Landresse. Calcutta, 1848. Travels of Fah-Hian and Sung-Yun, Buddhist pilgrims from China to India, by S. Beal. Trübner & Co., 1869. Mr Beal's unpretending volume is a treasury of valuable information.

The Tartars.

On leaving the desert the travellers pushed on through a rugged and barren region towards the remote kingdom of Khotan. The people on the way were all Tartars, more or less under the influence of Chinese culture. The shape of their dress was like that of the Chinese, but they wore felts and woollens instead of blue cottons. They spoke different dialects of the Tartar language. They were all inclined to Buddhism after the Indian schools; and the Srámans of the country studied the Buddhist scriptures in the Indian language;[48] but they belonged only to the elementary form of Buddhism known as the little Vehicle. The Uigúr people offered no obstruction to the pilgrims. Fah-Hian had obtained a pass which procured from the king of the Uigúrs a hospitable reception for the whole party. But the country beyond the Uigúrs was long, difficult, and desolate. The unfortunate pilgrims endured the utmost misery in crossing rivers and scaling mountains. At last they succeeded in reaching the kingdom of Khotan; and there for a while their toils were over. The laity of Khotan were extremely wealthy; and the kingdom was a stronghold of Buddhist culture according to the great Vehicle.[49]

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[47] Fah-Hian, chap. i.

[48] This Indian language was either Pali or Sanskrit. Probably it referred to both.

The little and great Vehicles.

The distinction between the little and great Vehicles is one of considerable significance in dealing with religious development. The little Vehicle was an expression of practical Buddhism; and dealt more with moral rules, and minor and precise precepts of discipline. The great Vehicle was an expression of intellectual Buddhism; and dealt more with metaphysical speculation, spiritual abstraction, and psychological analysis. The monks of the little Vehicle laid the most stress upon abstinence and restraint; those of the great Vehicle upon contemplation and study. The practices of the little Vehicle were more adapted to humanity in its childhood; those of the great Vehicle to the higher forms of mental culture. It would thus seem that the monks of the little Vehicle were striving after heaven; whilst the monks of the great Vehicle were striving after Nirvána.[50]

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[49] Fah-Hian, chap. ii.

[50] The Sanskrit names for the little and great Vehicles were Hínayána and Maháyána. Mr Beal, in the introduction to his translation of Fah-Hian, furnishes some interesting observations on the two Vehicles. See Introd. part iv. et seq. Compare also M. Saint Hilaire, "Le Bouddha et sa Religion," Part II., chap. iii.

Religious details supplied by Fah-Hian.

Fah-Hian was a true Sráman. He had no eyes for the social life of the people, excepting so far as it was associated with their religious aspects. He noticed with pious jōy that the inhabitants of Khotan took especial pleasure in the performance of their religious duties. He observed that they built their houses in clusters; but adds that stupas, or towers, were constructed before their doors; and that additional apartments in each house were set apart for the entertainment of foreign Srámans. The Sangháramas, or colleges of Buddhist monks, particularly attracted his admiration. These institutions indicate the vast development which Buddhism had gone through since the days of Sákya Muni. The house, or Vihára, had grown into a college, or Sangháráma. The monks were no longer distributed into little communities, but formed into large universities. Each Sangháráma contained numerous apartments for resident Srámans, together with surrounding grounds, and a chapel or hall for the Sanghá, or assembly.[51]

Kingdom of Khotan.

Fah-Hian and his companions were received with peculiar consideration by the king of Khotan, possibly because they were Srámans from China. They were lodged in a large Sangháráma, which was named Gómati, and enjoyed the special favour of the sovereign. This royal college contained three thousand monks, all of whom belonged to the great Vehicle. Fah-Hian now appears to have witnessed the superior spiritual life of the followers of the great Vehicle for the first time. Especially he noticed the pious order and silence that was maintained during the daily meal. At the sound of the gong, the whole of the three thousand Srámans assembled in the dining-hall, and took their seats one after the other with the utmost decorum and propriety. Not a sound was to be heard. No noise was made with the bowls, and there was no chattering amongst the monks. If a Sráman required food, he merely made a sign with his fingers, and was then supplied.[52]

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[51] The three gems,—Buddha, the Law and the Assembly,—known as Buddha, Dharma, and Sanghá,—had now a substantive existence.

Processions of images of Buddha.

Fah-Hian halted more than three months at Khotan, in order to witness the processions of images. Here it may be remarked that Fah-Hian was not only anxious to secure copies of the Buddhist scriptures, but to ascertain the more orthodox forms of religious practice. He duly notices the worship of relics, and the construction of stupas, monasteries, and colleges; and it will be seen hereafter that he collected images as well as sacred writings. The processions at Khotan would thus present peculiar attractions to the Chinese pilgrim; and they serve to recall to modern readers the extraordinary pictures of ancient life which still lingers on in modern Hinduism. There were fourteen large Sanghárámas in the capital, besides smaller ones; and each of the fourteen had its own procession, and a separate day for it. The first procession was that of the royal Gómati college, and will serve as a type of all. The streets were swept and watered, and decorated with garlands and banners. A pavilion was set up over the chief gate of the city for the reception of the king and all his ladies. Meantime, about three quarters of a mile from the city, the priests of the Gómati college had constructed a large four-wheeled car, about thirty-five feet in height, which resembled a royal palace. This car was adorned with gold, silver, and precious stones; and decorated with silken streamers, flags, and curtains. A golden image of Gótama Buddha was placed upright in the centre, with two Bódhisatwas in attendance, whilst images of all the gods were placed around.[53] All these images were made of gold and silver; whilst glittering gems were hung around them. The car was then conducted by a procession of Srámans towards the city. When it was within a hundred paces of the chief gate, the king descended from the pavilion, and laid aside his royal diadem, and arrayed himself in new garments. He then took flowers and incense in his hands, and went forth with bare feet to meet the procession of Srámans, followed by all his suite. On reaching the car he paid his adoration to Buddha by bowing his head to the ground; and then scattered flowers and burnt incense before the car. When the car reached the city the ladies in the pavilion threw down flowers in endless variety. In this manner each procession was brought to a close; the whole festival lasting fourteen days.[54]

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[52] Fah-Hian, chap. iii.

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[53] The Bódhisatwa is a being who has arrived at supreme wisdom (Bódhi), and yet consents to remain as a creature (satwa) for the good of men. The Bódhisatwas were originally men of eminent piety; but under the later system, they were imaginary beings idealized under certain forms, and possessed of certain distinct attributes.—Beal, Travels of Fah-Hian, chap. iv., *note*.

The gods were apparently placed in the car to enable them to pay homage to Buddha. This is a favourite idea of the Buddhists, but must have originally given considerable offence to the Bráhmans. These deities do not include the materialistic gods and goddesses, of whom Vishnu and Siva were the types; but the old Vedic group of deified spirits of the elements, of whom Indra was the divine sovereign. The association of these Vedic deities with Gótama Buddha is frequent in Burma; but there are no traces of Vishnu or Siva.

Quinquennial expiation at Kartchou.

From Khotan, Fah-Hian and his companions proceeded to Kartchou, where the king was performing another great ceremony in connection with Buddhism. This was the quinquennial expiation ordered by the third edict of Raja Priyadarsi.[55] The king of Kartchou had invited the attendance of the Srámans of every land. The great council-hall of the monks was decorated with silken flags and canopies. In the centre was erected a draped throne, adorned with gold and silver lotos flowers; and behind the throne were arranged the seats for the Srámans.[56] When all were assembled the king and his ministers made their offerings of woollens and other things necessary for the monks. The king and all his nobles and ministers then presented their horses and trappings to the assembly; but redeemed them afterwards by paying up the value.[57]

Pamir steppe and Hindú Kúsh.

After leaving Kartchou the Chinese pilgrims commenced the most dangerous part of the whole journey. Their route lay over the mountains of Bolor, which include the Pamir steppe, or "roof of the world;" and the western Himalayas, known as the Hindú Kúsh. The perils which the poor Srámans encountered in crossing these ranges can scarcely be realized. The mountains were supposed to shelter enormous dragons, who would spit their poison on all who chanced to offend them. On the

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[54] Fah-Hian, chap. iii.

[55] See Appendix I., Edicts of Asoka, Tablet iii.

[56] See the legendary account of the first Synod, Appendix II., Buddhist chronicles.

[57] Fah-Hian, chaps. iv., v.

Bolor mountains travellers often perished from the wind, rain, and snow, and the drift of sand and gravel. The steep crags and precipices of the Hindú Kúsh were equally terrible. The mountains were often huge walls of stone, thousands of feet in height. To look over the edge would turn the strongest brain, whilst at the slightest slip the unwary pilgrim would be dashed to pieces on the rocks below. At the foot of the mountains was the river Indus. It was approached by seven hundred steps which had been cut in the rock in ancient times; and it could only be crossed by one of those swinging bridges of rope, which are still in use in that quarter, and are dangerous in the extreme to the inexperienced traveller.[58]

Udyána and Swat country: worship of relics.

It is unnecessary to follow Fah-Hian through Udyána and the Swat country into the Punjab proper. The land is strewed with the ruins of Buddhism, but Buddhism itself has passed away with the advance of Islam. The localities were famous for exaggerated legends, which may still prove of interest to the pious Buddhist, but are worthless for all historical purposes.[59] Relics of

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[58] Fah-Hian, chaps. vi., vii.

[59] Buddhist legends may possibly yield more interesting results to special students in Buddhist lore, and may be studied in the learned works of Burnouf, Julien, and Saint Hilaire. But in general they are mere exaggerations of moral and religious teaching. The legends of Gótama Buddha giving away his flesh, whether to feed a starving tiger, or to satisfy a hawk which will otherwise devour a dove, are strained instances of benevolence which are revolting to European tastes; whilst other prodigies and miracles of a supernatural character, already indicated in dealing with the life of Gótama Buddha, may be passed over in silence. A few seem to be invested with a semi-historical value, which fades away on being analyzed. The story of Kunála, the son of Asoka, belongs to this category. It occupies ten quarto pages in Burnouf's "Buddhisme Indien," but may be summed up in a few sentences. One of Asoka's queens fell in love with the beautiful eyes of Kunála, but he refused to listen to her advances. He was subsequently sent to Takshasila, the Taxila of the Greeks, to govern the

Buddha, such as a tooth, a piece of his skull, his staff, his robes, and other memorials, were to be seen at different shrines, and formed objects of pilgrimage and daily devotion. They served to fill the void which was caused by the absence of deity. Originally they were probably the idols of the affections alone; and were worshipped by enthusiastic adorers, without hope and without fear. But in the fifth century of the Christian era, the selfishness of superstition had invested them with supernatural powers; and it was specially believed that the worship of the old robes of Gótama in times of drought would be followed by abundance of rain.[60]

Religious character of Fah-Hian's travels.

The Indian travels of Fah-Hian and his companions were almost exclusively of a religious character. Their journey was a pilgrimage to holy places, undertaken for the practical object of obtaining correct copies of the Buddhist scriptures. They consequently had no eyes for what was unconnected with Buddha and his religion. Fah-Hian seems to have almost ignored the Bráhmans. He dismisses them as heretics, and furnishes no information respecting their temples or their divinities. At the same time, he is credulous of every story that tells to their disadvantage. Occasionally, however, he notices the effect of Buddhism upon the condition of the people and the character of their administration;

Punjab. The queen appropriated the seal of Asoka, and sent an order to the people of Takshasila to pluck out the eyes of Kunála. The order was obeyed. Asoka ultimately discovered what had taken place. Kunála was rewarded for his piety by the supernatural restoration of his eyes; but the revengeful queen was burnt alive by the orders of Asoka, and all the people of Takshasila were put to death.—Buddhisme Indien, page 404, et seq. The pious legend was evidently borrowed from the Græco-Bactrian story of Antiochus and Stratonice.

[60] Fah-Hian, chaps. viii.—xiv.

and thus furnishes some data which throw a light upon the political state of the country.

Buddhism in the Punjab.

In the Punjab Fah-Hian found that Buddhism was flourishing, or rather beginning to flourish, in connection with both the little and the great Vehicles. He mentions with pride and emotion the hospitalities which were offered to his little party, and the surprise which was expressed that men should have come from so far a land as China, solely out of love for Buddha and his law. Fah-Hian, however, furnishes little available data respecting the Punjab. Probably he was anxious to push his way down the Ganges and Jumna towards the holy land which had been trodden by Gótama; but there is reason to believe that Brahmanism still maintained a strong hold upon the people, and like a strict Sráman of somewhat narrow views, Fah-Hian passed over the fact in silence.[61]

Brahmanical pale.

From the Punjab Fah-Hian entered the Brahmanical pale. The country was full of temples and Bráhmans; but as he approached the kingdom of Mathura on the Jumna, he found that Buddhism was reviving. The fact is significant, as Mathura is the cradle of the worship of Krishna; and the substitution of the worship of Krishna for the old adoration of Buddha is one of the most important phases in the history of modern Hinduism. Fah-Hian did not proceed to western India, the modern Rajpootana; but he describes the kings as faithful believers in Buddha. There the sovereigns rigidly obeyed the traditions. They uncovered their heads when they paid their religious offerings to the monks; and both kings and ministers often conducted the Srámans to their own palaces for the purpose of entertaining them with food.[62]

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[61] Fah-Hian, chap. xv. Two centuries later Hiouen-Thsang found that in the centre of the Punjab the people still worshipped the spirits of heaven, that is, the Vedic deities, and that there were few who believed in the law of Buddha. —Julien, Memoires par Hiouen-Thsang, vol. ii., page 189.

Middle country mildness of Buddhist administration.

Further to the south, towards Agra and Kanouj, Fah-Hian entered the region of Madya-desa, or the "middle country." Here the government was deeply imbued with the mild and gentle spirit of Buddhism. The people were prosperous and happy, for there was no registration of families for the purposes of taxation. No one paid any portion of the produce as rent, excepting those who farmed the royal demesnes, and they were allowed to give up the land whenever they pleased. Offenders were not subjected to corporal punishment, but only fined. Rebels, however, convicted of repeated rebellions, were deprived of their right hands. No one, except the Chandálas, killed any living thing, or drank anything intoxicating, or even dealt in living animals. There were no shambles and no wine shops. The Chandálas alone were permitted to hunt or to deal in flesh of any kind.[63]

Monastic life of the Srámans.

The Srámans of these countries were maintained without any care on their part, and entirely at the public expense. Ever since the Nirvána of Gótama, Buddha kings and nobles had erected Viháras, and endowed them with lands, gardens, and houses, and also with men and oxen to cultivate them. These endowments were registered on copper plates, and handed down by each king to his successor, so that all the Srámans continued to enjoy their proper revenues without intermission. All the resident monks were provided with chambers, beds, coverlets, provisions, and clothes. They were constantly employed in works of benevolence, in reciting their scriptures, or in profound meditations. A stranger Sráman was received with every hospitality. The elder brethren went out to meet him, and conducted him to their Vihára, and carried for him his clothes and alms bowl. They prepared a repast for him, whatever might be the hour.[64] They allotted him a chamber according to his age. Wherever the Srámans took up their residence, they were exhorted by the principal families of the neighbourhood to commence their religious services. When a great congregation was assembled, the Srámans repeated the law. The Srámans also erected towers in honour of the three great disciples, and the three baskets of scriptures;[65] and on certain festivals they presented offerings of flowers and incense on these towers, and burnt lamps all the night.[66]

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[62] Fah-Hian, chap. xvi.

[63] Fah-Hian, chap. xvi. It will be seen hereafter that the administration was of the same mild character two centuries later, during the travels of Hiouen-Thsang.

Kanouj and Kosala: Brahmanical ascendancy.

Fah-Hian next proceeded to the kingdoms of Kanouj and Kosala; and it would appear from his narrative that both kingdoms were already hotbeds of Brahmanism. In the city of Kanouj there were only two Sanghárámas, and both belonged to the little Vehicle. In Kosala the Bráhmans were very troublesome. They had tried to destroy the buildings of the Buddhists, but had been prevented by storms of thunder and lightning. They had built a temple to the gods next to a Buddhist chapel; but although the shadow of the chapel sometimes fell on the temple, the shadow of the temple never fell on the chapel. Again, one morning the Bráhmans missed the lamps from their temple, and found them burning in the chapel. The following night they set a watch, when to their astonishment the gods themselves came down and took the lamps, and walked round the chapel in solemn procession and then disappeared, leaving the lamps burning in the chapel. Such were the fables that Fah-Hian heard with pious faith, and recorded for the benefit of believers in the land of Han.[67]

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[64] Whilst Srámans were on their travels, they were exempted from the monastic rule which proscribes eating after noon.

[65] The three great disciples were Sáriputra, Mogalan, and Ananda. The two former were two Bráhmans whom Gótama had converted, and who had become his favourite disciples. Ananda was the faithful monk who devoted his whole time to the personal service of Gótama, and finally reported the Sútras or discourses at the first Synod. The three baskets of scriptures were the Vináya, the Sútra, and the Abhidharma Pitakas. See Appendix II.

[66] Fah-Hian, chap. xvi.

Pilgrimages to holy places.

Fah-Hian visited all the holy spots which were associated with the life of Gótama;—his birth-place at Kapila; his place of burning near Kusinagara; the city of Rajagriha, where he commenced his career of mendicancy; the jungle of Gayá, where he became Buddha; the city of Benares, and especially the deer forest, where he commenced his apostolic career. The narrative of these pilgrimages may be passed over in silence. It is studded with pious legends, which however edifying to the ancient believer, would have no significance for European readers.[68]

City of Patali-putra: its Buddhist institutions.

Fah-Hian resided for three years in the once famous city of Patali-putra; the metropolis of the kingdom of Magadha, which was still a large and important dominion. Patali-putra was only a petty village in the life-time of Gótama, but had subsequently grown to be one of the greatest capitals in India. It was here that Megasthenes had dwelt and Asoka had reigned; and it was here that Fah-Hian finally accomplished the object of his mission by securing copies of the Buddhist scriptures, and learning the sacred language in which they were composed. The Chinese pilgrim records some interesting particulars of Patali-putra.[69] In the middle of the city were still to be seen the ruins of the palace of Asoka, which that mighty sovereign had commissioned the genii to construct; and the pious Sráman proclaims in the language of faith, that the massive masonry and sculptured towers were never the work of mortal hands. Every year the people celebrated a grand procession of images, like that which the Chinese pilgrim had already witnessed in the kingdom of Khotan. Great towers, resembling pagodas, were carried about in four-wheeled cars. They were covered with white linen painted over with gaily-coloured pictures. Figures of the gods were covered with gold, silver, and lapis lazuli, and placed in each pagoda car; whilst a figure of Buddha in a sitting posture was placed in a shrine at each of the four quarters of the pagoda, with a Bódhisatwa standing in attendance. Twenty of these cars were constructed, but all were decorated differently. They entered the city one after the other, and took up their several positions. During the day the Srámans and laity assembled in vast multitudes. The Srámans offered flowers and burnt incense before the cars; whilst the laity made their religious offerings, and burnt lamps, and indulged in games and amusements which lasted throughout the night. Fah-Hian also noticed the hospitals which had been founded in Patali-putra by the nobles and wealthy round about, similar to those which had been established by Asoka. The poor of all countries, the destitute, the crippled and the diseased, repaired to these hospitals for food and shelter. Every requisite was supplied gratuitously. Physicians inspected their diseases, and ordered them diet and medicine according to their respective cases; and when they were cured they were permitted to depart at their own convenience.[70]

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[67] Fah-Hian, chaps. xvii.—xx.

[68] Fah-Hian, chaps. xxi.—xxvi.

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[69] The account which Fah-Hian furnishes of this celebrated city is all the more interesting from the fact that two centuries afterwards the metropolis was in ruins.

Pride of caste in a converted Bráhman.

One incident is recorded by Fah-Hian which seems to prove that the pride of caste was still deeply rooted even in those Bráhmans who had been brought under the influence of Buddhist culture. A great Bráhman pundit dwelt in the city of Patali-putra, and had embraced the law of Buddha as it was taught by the great Vehicle. He devoted his whole time to silent meditation, and was supposed to have mastered every science. During fifty years the people far and wide placed the utmost confidence in this learned sage; and so mightily did he extend the knowledge of Buddha and the law, that the heretics were unable to gain a single advantage over the Srámans. The king honoured him as his Guru, or religious superior, and never ventured to sit down in his presence. Yet if the sovereign, out of affectionate esteem, happened to touch him by the hand, the Bráhman deemed himself impure, and immediately bathed from head to foot. Strangely enough, whilst Fah-Hian relates the incident, he seems to have been unconscious of the caste feelings by which the Bráhman was guided.[71]

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[70] Fah-Hian, ch. xxvii.

Superior philanthropy of Fah-Hian.

After three years' study at Patali-putra Fah-Hian began to prepare for proceeding on his pilgrimage alone. The four companions with whom he had left China were now all dead excepting one, and that one refused to return. In India he had seen the perfection of monastic discipline and decorum; and he vowed that he would never again dwell in the outskirts of Buddhism, until he himself should have become a Buddha. Fah-Hian, however, was burning with a philanthropic desire to carry his scriptures and images to the land of Han, and spread abroad a better knowledge of the law amongst his own countrymen. Accordingly he resolved to proceed to Ceylon and complete his stock of sacred books. He would have preferred undertaking the journey by land; but the roads through the Dekhan were dangerous and intricate, and it would have been necessary to secure guides by making large presents to the king of the country. This he was unable to do. He therefore proceeded down the Ganges to the kingdom of Tamluk at the mouth of the Húghly;[72] and after a considerable stay he embarked for Ceylon, where he

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[71] Fah-Hian, chap. xxvii. Fah-Hian also noticed a pillar in Patali-putra which bore the following inscription :—" King Asóka, gifted with invincible faith, has thrice given the whole of Jambudwípa to Buddha, the law, and the assembly, and has thrice redeemed it with all the valuable property in his possession." The significance of this inscription will be best explained by a reference to the redemption of offerings made to the priests by the king and nobles of Kartchon (see *ante*, p. 249). Jambudwipa is the central continent in the mythical geography of the universe, and includes the earth. The gift of Asóka must therefore be regarded as an oriental metaphor.

[72] Fah-Hian, chap. xxviii. *et seq.*

Return of Fah-Hian to China.

made further copies of the Buddhist scriptures, and then finally returned to his own land.[73]

Travels of Hiouen-Thsang, 629—645.

Fah-Hian was absent from China between A.D. 399 and 414. Two centuries after this date another Chinese Sráman appeared in the Punjab. His name was Hiouen-Thsang. He left China in the year 629, and did not return until 645. He spent the intervening years in travel and study, for the purpose of accomplishing in India the same objects that were effected by Fah-Hian.

Liberal character of Hiouen-Thsang.

Hiouen-Thsang was a monk of a very different stamp from his pious and humble predecessor. He apparently belonged to a more honourable family, and was certainly a man of broader intellect and higher culture. He was zealous for Buddha and the law, and had been an ardent and successful student in the higher forms of Buddhist philosophy which were taught by the great Vehicle. He did not, however, confine his studies to those books which expressed his religious opinions. He was prepared to master the literature of both Vehicles, as well as the sacred and profane books of the Bráhmans. Moreover, he was a man of some observation. He was so far imbued with the spirit of the age as to devote the greater portion of his narrative to holy legends and extraordinary miracles and prodigies; but he furnishes some curious information respecting the political and religious condition of India in the seventh century, which may be accepted as the authentic testimony of an intelligent and impartial traveller.[74]

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[73] A few details of the voyages of Fah-Hian are worth preserving. He embarked at Tamluk on board a merchant vessel during the prevalence of the north-east monsoon, and in fourteen days he reached the island of Ceylon. At Ceylon he remained for two years, still engaged in copying the scriptures. At last he prepared to return to China. He obtained a passage on board a large merchant ship that was going to Java, and carried about two hundred men. A smaller vessel was towed astern, as a refuge in the event of a leak or wreck. A terrible storm arose, and preparations were made for hauling up the auxiliary vessel, when the crew of the latter ship became afraid of being swamped, and cut the towing-cable and shifted off. The merchants were now in the utmost alarm. They threw all their merchandise overboard. Fah-Hian cast away all his little property, but succeeded in concealing his scriptures and images. After a perilous voyage of ninety days Fah-Hian at last arrived at Java, where heretics and Bráhmans flourished, and where Buddhism was scarcely known. Fah-Hian remained five months at Java, and then embarked in another large merchant vessel for Canton. After a month the ship encountered a typhoon, and all on board were in mortal danger. Some Bráhmans advised that the poor Sráman should be thrown overboard, as the real cause of the tempest. Fortunately a patron stood forward and took the part of Fah-Hian, and the Chinese pilgrim at last reached Nankin in safety with his priceless treasures.

Surface life of the Indian towns.

The India of the seventh century certainly presents more characteristics of peculiar interest. The surface life of the towns was apparently much the same as it is in the present day, only that it bears the ameliorating and benevolent impress of Buddhism. Hiouen-Thsang describes the tortuous streets and lanes; the brick houses and verandahs, with walls plastered with cow-dung; the roofs either of bamboos and dry grass, or of planks and tiles; the public buildings with their towers and terraces; the absence of all butchers' shops and wine-sellers; and the secluded villages of Chandálas without the city. The dwelling-houses are said to have been elegant inside, but plain and unadorned outside. The ground in front of the houses was strewed with flowers, just as is often to be seen in the present day, especially at morning time. The only exterior ornament was a couch of brick and plaster against the wall, which doubtless resembled the benches plastered with white chunam, which are still to be found outside the majority of native houses. The Buddhist colleges or Sanghárámas have long since passed away, but still it is not difficult to recall them. They were large open quadrangles, with pavilions of two or three stories high at each of the four corners, and probably a chapel or assembly hall in the centre. The pious zeal of ages had expended much art and magnificence in decorating these handsome buildings. The beams and joists were covered with sculptures, and the windows, partitions, and walls were adorned with pictures of different colours.[75]

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[74] The travels of Hiouen-Thsang are much more comprehensive than those of Fah-Hian. They are comprised in two volumes entitled "Mémoires sur les contrées occidentales, traduits du Sanskrit en Chinois, en l'an 648, par Hiouen-Thsang, et du Chinois en Français par M. Stanislas Julien." 2 vols. Paris, 1857 and 1858. There is also a third volume which was published first, containing the memoirs of Hiouen-Thsang as written by two of his disciples. There are three interesting chapters on these books in the second part of the eloquent work of M. Barthelemy Saint-Hilaire, "Le Bouddha et sa Religion." (Third edition, Paris, 1866.) The first is devoted to the life of Hiouen-Thsang; the second to the condition of India as described by Hiouen-Thsang; and the third to Indian Buddhism as described by Hiouen-Thsang. A useful outline of the travels of Hiouen-Thsang has been added by Professor Cowell, in the form of an appendix to his edition of Elphinstone's History of India.

Besides Fah-Hian and Hiouen-Thsang, other Chinese pilgrims reached India, but their narratives are brief and devoid of interest.

Contrast between ancient and modern Hindús.

The people of India, however, as described by Hiouen-Thsang, would almost appear to have been a different race to the modern Hindús. They had not as yet been moulded into existing forms by ages of Brahmanical repression and Mussulman tyranny; and they bore a stronger resemblance to the unsophisticated Buddhists of modern Burma, than to the worshippers of Vishnu and Siva. The Chinese pilgrim states that they were naturally volatile, but distinguished by their rectitude and honesty of character. They committed no frauds. They confirmed their promises by oaths. They feared the chastisements of another world. Their customs were easy and gentle.[76]

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[75] Mémoires de Hiouen-Thsang, Liv. ii. Notice sur l'Inde, sect. 5.

[76] Hiouen-Thsang, Liv. ii., sect. 13.

Mild administration of justice.

The administration of justice amongst the Hindús was exceedingly mild. They had no capital punishments. Even rebels were not put to death, but only imprisoned for life. They were neither beaten nor whipped, but simply left to live or die. But those who violated justice, or failed in their fidelity, or neglected their duties to their father and mother, were condemned to lose their ears, noses, or their hands and feet. Sometimes they were expelled to the barbarous regions beyond the frontier. Other offences were punished by fines.

Trial by ordeal

The administration of justice was concealed as much as possible from the public gaze. Neither staff nor whip was employed to induce offenders to confess their crimes. If the accused frankly acknowledged his fault, he was awarded suitable punishment. If he obstinately denied it, or sought to palliate it, he was tried by the four ordeals of water, fire, weight, or poison; and by these means his innocence or guilt was established without further question.[77]

Public revenue.

The whole system of government was based upon the benevolent spirit of Buddhism. There was no registration of families for taxation; no requisition for gratuitous labour. All who were employed in the construction of royal buildings or other public works were paid according to their labour. The people in general held the heritages of their fathers, and cultivated the land for a livelihood, paying one-sixth of the produce to the king. The merchants, who gained their subsistence by traffic, paid small duties on their goods at ferries and barriers. The military class defended the frontier; some guarded the royal palace. Soldiers were raised according to the necessities of the service, and were encouraged to enlist by the promise of rewards.[78]

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[77] The Hindú trials by ordeal resembled similar trials in old English times. In the ordeal by water they placed the accused in one sack and a stone in another sack, and then tied the two sacks together and threw them into a deep running stream. If the man sunk and the stone rose, he was deemed guilty; if the stone sunk and the man rose, he was deemed innocent. In the ordeal by fire a red-hot iron was applied to the tongue of the accused, and also to the soles of his feet and palms of his hands. If he escaped uninjured he was deemed innocent; if he was much burnt he was convicted of the crime. Some persons, however, cannot endure the heat of the fire. In such cases the accused take certain buds in their hands, and throw them into the flames. If the buds open their leaves, the accused was deemed innocent; if they were burnt up, he was deemed guilty. In the ordeal by weight, they put the accused in one scale, and a stone in the other. If the man over-weighted the stone, he was deemed innocent; if the stone overweighted the man, he was deemed guilty. In the ordeal by poison, the food of a bullock was poisoned, and a wound was made in his right leg and poisoned also. If the animal lived, the person accused was deemed to be innocent; if it died he was deemed guilty. Hiouen-Thsang, Liv. ii., sect. 13.

Public expenditure.

The revenue from the crown lands was divided into four parts. One portion was devoted to the expenses of the kingdom, and supply of grain for sacrifice. A second portion was set aside for the support of the ministers and members of the council of state. A third was given away as rewards to men of distinguished intelligence, knowledge, or talent. The fourth was employed in what is figuratively termed the cultivation of the field of happiness.[79] All governors, magistrates, and officials received certain lands for their maintenance.[80]

Distribution of India with petty kingdoms.

Hiouen-Thsang describes India as being distributed amongst a number of petty kingdoms. This

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[78] Hiouen-Thsang, Liv. ii., sect. 16. This statement conflicts with that of Fah-Hian. See *ante*, page 253.

[79] The cultivation of the field of happiness was one of the most striking features of the old Hindú governments. It will be fully described hereafter. It may, however, be explained here that it was based upon the belief that happiness could be cultivated by good works. The rich were enabled, by reason of their wealth, to perform such good works as making offerings to the gods, vestments to statues, and alms-giving to all classes of holy men, Bráhmans as well as Srámans. The poor, however, were compelled to content themselves with such good works as paying respect to the three precious things, namely, religion, mother, and father.

[80] Hiouen-Thsang, Liv. ii., sect. xvi.

CHAPTER V.

indeed appears to have been the condition of the Indian continent from time immemorial. Megasthenes says that India comprised one hundred and twenty-two kingdoms.[81] Hiouen-Thsang reckons seventy in India proper. Each of these kingdoms was independent and self-contained like the Hindú village. Sometimes a hero or conqueror appeared, like Porus or Sandrokottos, and reduced a group of petty kings to the condition of feudatories. But such empires often proved as evanescent as Tartar camps. An emperor died and left his dominion to his successor; but whilst the nominal status remained the same, the empire had practically disappeared; the feudatory princes recovered their independence, and once again became sovereigns. The basis of this political distribution is unknown. The differences of races, of languages, of worship, and of customs, may account for many individual states. Others have been created by river, mountain, forest, or irreclaimable waste. The empires of the Kshatriyas have been superseded by the Mussulmans; the Mussulmans by the Mahrattas; and all have been brought under the paramount power of the British government. But many of the traditionary kingdoms of India still retain their ancient frontiers, like the Greek kingdoms of the Homeric age. The once ruling dynasties have passed into oblivion; the frontiers have been obliterated from the map of India; the British government has reduced the greater part of the country to one level, and distributed it according to the arbitrary requirements of the military or revenue administration. But still the landmarks of the ancient states linger on in local legend; in the unwritten chronicles of the past which are but slowly fading away from the national memory. History has vanished from the land, but the names survive.[82]

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[81] Arrian, India, chap. vii.

The village, the kingdom, and the empire.

Thus in the Hindú system the village and the kingdom were permanent institutions. But history deals more with the transitory than with the permanent; with the episodes in the life of humanity, the revolutions which overthrow kingdoms and create and overturn empires, rather than with the monotonous existence of little states which run in the same narrow grooves for centuries. In the time of Hiouen-Thsang Magadha was the theatre of history; the seat of an empire which included Patali-putra, Prayága, and Kanouj, and must have extended over the greater part of Hindustan. The reigning sovereign was named Síláditya. He was the type of a Buddhist emperor like Asoka. His religious character will be reviewed hereafter. His political status may be indicated in a few words. He had carried his victorious arms to the east and west. At least eighteen feudatory princes paid him homage as their suzerain.[83] But there was one important nation which resisted his arms and defied his power. The people were unconquerable. They were the Mahrattas of the western Dekhan; the men of ancient Maharashtra.

The Mahrattas of the seventh century of our

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[82] Saint Hilaire, Bouddha, part ii., chap. ii.

[83] It will be seen hereafter that Siláditya was represented in eastern India by Kumára, king of Káma-rupa, and in the Dekhan by his son-in-law Dhruva-patu, king of Vallabhi. Both Kumára and Dhruva-patu maintained a paramount power over their neighbours, but they acknowledged the suzerainty of Síláditya.

Superiority of the ancient Mahrattas to the modern type.

era were not the same race as the Mahrattas that rose to the surface in the seventeenth century. The Mahrattas of modern history are a short, vulgar people, without pride or dignity, prone to duplicity, and ever ready to sacrifice honour to interest. But the Mahrattas described by Hiouen-Thsang bore a close resemblance to the Rajpoots. They were simple and honest, tall in stature, and haughty in character. They were hot-headed, but grateful; ever ready to revenge an affront, or to help an ally. Their sense of honour was such that they warned an enemy before resenting an injury. They pursued those who fled, but they spared those who surrendered. If a commander lost a battle, he was compelled to wear a woman's dress, and generally committed suicide. Before commencing a battle these warriors got drunk themselves, and made their elephants drunk likewise. In this condition they hastened to the conflict, ready to encounter any odds; whilst the maddened elephants rushed forward in a mass, and trampled down all before them. These Mahrattas of olden time were fond of learning, like the people of Magadha, Malwa, the Punjab, and Cashmere; and in this respect they exhibited a marked contrast to the illiterate Mahrattas of more modern times. In religion one-half belonged to Buddhism and the other half to Brahmanism; there were a hundred Viháras of both the great and little Vehicles, and a hundred temples to the gods.[84]

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[84] M. Saint-Hilaire is apparently mistaken in assuming that the people of Maharashtra, as described by Hiouen-Thsang, were the ancestry of the Mahrattas of modern history. The modern Mahrattas are probably descendants of the Yadavas, who migrated to Maharashtra about the 12th century of our era.

The Mahratta Raja.

Pulakesa, the king of Maharashtra, was a true Kshatriya. His views were large and profound. His liberality was unbounded. His subjects served him with absolute devotion. He thus belonged to a very different type from that of Sivajee; and had sprung from a different stock to that of Scindia and Holkar. He flourished in a golden age which has passed away from Maharashtra; and may yet be succeeded by another which shall surpass it in real glory.

Travels of Hiouen-Thsang in Central Asia and Northern India.

The personal adventures of Hiouen-Thsang are chiefly valuable on account of the light they throw on the religious condition of Hindustan. He commenced his travels at the age of twenty-six. He pursued a route somewhat similar to that of Fah-Hian, but seems to have made a detour much farther to the north and west. He crossed the river Jaxartes into Bokhara, and paid a visit to Samarkand. He next crossed the river Oxus into Balkh, and then proceeded over the western Himalayas at Bámyán into the kingdom of Kapisa, which seems to have been seated in the modern Cabul.[85] Along the whole of this route Buddhism was in a flourishing condition. In Kapisa there was a Kshatriya king, and a hundred monasteries with six thousand monks; but there were also scores of temples, which were evidently of a Brahmanical character, and many sects of heretics of the old Brahmanical type. Some went about naked; others rubbed themselves with ashes, and wore skulls as ornaments. He then entered northern India, and visited Lampá or Langhán. On the south-east lay

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[85] Kapisa, the Capissa of Pliny, was at this period the seat of an empire which extended over two kingdoms.

Gandhára, with its capital named Purushapura, the modern Peshawar, which at this time was subject to Kapisa; the inhabitants were effeminate, but devoted to literature. Here were numerous Buddhist monasteries and stupas in ruins, including many a monument built by Asoka or Kanishka. The multitude of temples proved the prevalence of Brahmanism, especially in association with the worship of Iswara, or Siva. Hiouen-Thsang proceeded northwards to Udyána, where most of the Buddhist monasteries were in ruins. He entered Cashmere, and found it subject to a dynasty of kings who supported Brahmanism. Proceeding southwards to Mathura and Tanesar, he found that Brahmanism was at least as prevalent as Buddhism. At this stage he appears to have heard some distorted legend of the great war recorded in the Mahá Bhárata; and refers to the bones of the warriors which have covered the plain of Kurukshetra from the remotest antiquity, and were of an enormous size. Amongst other places he visited the city of Kanouj, which was about four miles long and one mile broad. Its king was named Harshavardhana, and takes a prominent part hereafter in the description of Buddhist India. He belonged to the Vaisya caste and had assumed the name of Síláditya. He had established his ascendancy over the greater part of India, and was a zealous patron of Buddhism, and a follower of the great Vehicle. The kingdom of Kanouj was wealthy and full of merchandise.

Encounter with river pirates between Ayodhyá and Prayága.

Hiouen-Thsang next proceeded to Ayodhyá, where Buddhism appeared to be in a struggling condition; and to Prayága, where Brahmanism was decidedly flourishing. Between these two places he met with an adventure, which is related by his two disciples. He was descending the Ganges in a boat, which carried eighty other persons, and was attacked by river-pirates, who worshipped the goddess Durgá after the fashion of the modern Thugs, and prepared to offer up the Chinese pilgrim as a sacrifice to that terrible deity. Fortunately the piratical boats were upset by a sudden squall, and Hiouen-Thsang was saved. The pirates escaped with difficulty, and are said to have been so affected by the circumstance, that they prostrated themselves before the holy man, and restored all the property they had stolen. Hiouen-Thsang took the opportunity of teaching them the five commandments, which they received with respect, and then went their way.[86]

Holy places of Buddhism surrounded by Brahmanism.

South-west of Prayága was a dense forest infested with wild beasts and elephants. At Kausambi and Srávasti Brahmanism was flourishing and Buddhism in decay. Kapila, the birth-place of Gótama Buddha, was in ruins. At other localities associated with the life of Buddha, including the city of Benares, Brahmanism was in the ascendant, and generally associated with the worship of Iswara or Siva. Some of the heretics cut their hair; others left a tuft on the top of their heads, and went about naked; others rubbed themselves with ashes; whilst others practised painful austerities. Vaisali was a heap of ruins. Buddhist monasteries were deserted, whilst Brahmanical temples were flourishing on all sides. In Magadha there were fifty Buddhist monasteries with ten thousand monks; but the

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[86] Saint Hilaire, part ii., chap. i.

Brahmanical temples were also numerous and well frequented. Patali-putra had long been deserted; it had fallen into ruins after the visit of Fah-Hian, but its remains covered an area of fourteen miles. Hiouen-Thsang counted hundreds of broken-down monasteries, stupas, and pagodas. Gayá was a well-defended city, but very difficult of access. It was thinly peopled, but contained a thousand families of Bráhmans. Ancient Rajagriha was in ruins; but there was a new Rajagriha occupied by numerous Bráhman families.

Hiouen-Thsang invited to Nálanda.

Whilst staying at Bodhimanda, the spot where Sákya Muni became Buddha, Hiouen-Thsang received an invitation to take up his abode in the Sangháráma of Nálanda. This sacred retreat was the largest and most celebrated Buddhist college in all India, and was under the special patronage of Síláditya, the great sovereign of Magadha and Kanouj. Hiouen-Thsang dwelt five years at Nálanda; and the description which has been preserved of the buildings and studies, furnishes one of the most graphic pictures of these ancient seats of Buddhist learning.

The Buddhist university.

After making every allowance for oriental exaggeration, it is evident that the Sangháráma at Nálanda must have been the most magnificent university in the eastern world. If the bare statement may be accepted that ten thousand monks and novices were lodged within the walls, an idea of vastness is found which can scarcely be realized. It may, however, be remarked that the site was regarded as the holiest spot in all Magadha. It was said to be the mango grove which some rich merchants had made over to Gótama Buddha, and where he had passed a considerable portion of his life. Again, the institution had not been founded by a single king, but had been enlarged, embellished, and endowed at intervals by a succession of pious sovereigns, extending possibly over a period of nine centuries from Asoka downwards. Towers, domes, and pavilions rose above a paradise of shady trees, secluded gardens, and sparkling fountains. There were six large blocks of buildings four stories high, in which the inmates were lodged. There were a hundred lecture-rooms in different branches of study. There were other large halls for conferences. The whole was distributed in eight courts. Every necessary was gratuitously supplied to the ten thousand inmates, including vestments and medicines as well as lodging and board.

Studies in Buddhism and Brahmanism.

In this splendid retreat, far away from the busy turmoil of the court and capital, the monks and novices pursued their daily studies without cares and without distractions. The Sangháráma became celebrated throughout India, not only for the beauty of its structures and gardens, but for the learning of its pupils, and the high intellectual calibre of its masters. The monks in general belonged to the great Vehicle; but all the eighteen sects of Buddhism were represented within the walls; and besides the religious books all the sciences were studied, even medicine and arithmetic. A thousand individuals could be found within the Sangháráma, who could explain twenty books of the Sútras and Sástras; five hundred who could explain thirty books; but only ten who understood fifty books. Sílabhadra, the Superior of the Sangháráma, had read and learnt all the Sútras and all the Sástras; and it was to his eminent virtues,

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his superior wisdom, and his venerable age that he owed the rank he held within the sacred walls.[87]

Introduction of Hiouen-Thsang.

The details connected with the entrance of Hiouen-Thsang into this famous institution form a curious illustration of monastic manners in the old Buddhist times. Hiouen-Thsang's reputation and travels had naturally excited great curiosity in the Indian monasteries. Four monks of distinguished learning and piety brought him the invitation to take up his abode in the Nálanda Sanghárâma in due form. When he approached the spot, two hundred monks came out to receive him, accompanied by a crowd of the faithful. They carried umbrellas, flags, perfumes, and flowers. They sounded his praises after the manner of royal eulogists; and conducted him with all ceremony into the sacred enclosure. They first led him to the raised dais on which the president was seated; and then the sub-director sounded the gong and repeated the invitation to the Sanghárâma. Hiouen-Thsang then paid his homage to the venerable Sílabhadra, and henceforth received his lessons, and served him as a disciple. He was lodged in the best rooms, together with his suite consisting of ten persons; and he received a daily supply of provisions from the king. Two monks became his servants, the one a Sráman and the other a Bráhman; and they occasionally conducted him to one or other of the holy spots in the neighbourhood, either on an elephant, or on a car, or in a palanquin. During five years he steadily pursued his studies under the guidance of the learned Sílabhadra.

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[87] Saint Hilaire, Bouddha, part ii., chap. i.

He especially studied the Sanskrit grammar of Pánini, which was a resumé of all previous works upon the subject. At length he was a thorough master of the Sanskrit language. He had acquired a perfect knowledge of the three baskets of Buddhist scriptures, as well as of all the books of the Bráhmans. He accordingly left Nálanda, and set out on his travels.[87]

Great public disputations.

During his residence at Nálanda, Hiouen-Thsang had more than one opportunity of displaying his controversial powers in those great public disputations which seem to have been an institution in Buddhist India. On one occasion a celebrated Bráhman challenged the whole Sangháráma to refute forty articles of belief which he set up in writing over the gates of the college. Hiouen-Thsang accepted the challenge by tearing down the document, and effectually silenced his opponent by disproving every article, and then exposing the errors of all the heresies. At this juncture Raja Síláditya had been offended by some Buddhist monks of the little Vehicle; and he requested the venerable superior of the Sangháráma at Nálanda to send four of his best masters to his capital at Kanouj, to confute the refractory Srámans. Hiouen-Thsang and three others were chosen. The disputation was heard in the presence of the king, and all his ministers and feudatories. At early dawn a golden statue of Buddha was carried in a grand procession of elephants from the royal pavilion to a great tower; and all present, from the Raja downwards, paid their homage to the statue. After this procession, an entertainment was served up in an assembly hall, and the so-called disputation began. It resolved itself however into an eloquent oration, which was delivered by Hiouen-Thsang, and lasted several days. Every morning the statue was carried from the pavilion to the tower, and every evening it was carried back from the tower to the pavilion. Meantime Hiouen-Thsang continued his discourse day by day. No report has been preserved of this celebrated harangue, but it is easy to infer its general character. The acute exponent of the great Vehicle was familiar with all the metaphysical philosophy, which occupied the intellects of the learned, in an age when the physical sciences were scarcely known. He belonged to that school of thought which sought by study and contemplation to abstract itself from all humanity; and consequently looked down with disdain on the petty rules of discipline, by which the monks of the little Vehicle guarded against the approaches of passion or desire. Against such an intellectual system of philosophy the morality of the little Vehicle was powerless to contend. It could only appeal to humanity, and the great Vehicle ignored humanity. Hiouen-Thsang, on the contrary, could open up those fields of abstract thought and speculation, which dazzled and bewildered inferior minds, and against which it would have been useless for the men of the little Vehicle to appeal. In this way the followers of the little Vehicle may have been enforced to silence. The religion of the heart was overpowered by the reasoning of the religion of the intellect. The victory of Hiouen-Thsang was proclaimed by the Raja, and he was hailed by the multitude as the deity of the great Vehicle.[88]

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[87] Saint Hilaire, Bouddha, part ii., chap. i.

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[88] Saint Hilaire, Bouddha, part ii., chap. i.

Festival of expiation.

But there was one important event that occurred during the residence of Hiouen-Thsang at Nálanda, which illustrates beyond all others the true spirit of ancient Buddhism. This was the celebration of the great quinquennial expiation, which had been ordained by Asoka, and which Fah-Hian had witnessed on a small scale at the city of Kartchou before entering India.

Confession an almsgiving.

The history of this festival is extremely significant. It was associated with the ancient practice of confession. Originally every Buddhist monk had been required to confess twice a month, namely, at the new and full moon.[89] This rite gradually extended to the laity, but proved inconvenient. Accordingly the great festival of expiation by confession and alms-giving was only celebrated every five years; and after Hiouen-Thsang's time, confession amongst the laity disappeared altogether. It was on these occasions that the kings of Magadha engaged in those royal liberalities, which were symbolically described as the cultivation of the field of happiness.

Field of happiness at Prayága.

The scene was a large plain, five or six miles round, at the confluence of the Ganges and Jumna, —the holiest spot in all Hindustan. From time immemorial this had been known as the field of happiness. To give a pice in that field was as meritorious as to give a lakh elsewhere.[90] Raja Síláditya had already celebrated five of these festivals; and the one witnessed by Hiouen-Thsang was the sixth of the reign. The preparations were made in conformity with ancient custom. A large area, four thousand feet square, was hedged round with roses. Within this enclosure were a series of halls filled with gold and silver, vestments of silk and cotton, and valuables of every kind. In the neighbourhood of this enclosure were a hundred dining houses arranged in a straight line like the shops of a bazaar. In each house a thousand persons could eat at once. For many days before the festival, proclamations had been made inviting all Srámans and Bráhmans, all the destitute, the fatherless, and the kinless, to come to Prayága and share in the liberality of the pious Raja. Monks, Bráhmans, and people, to the number of half a million, flocked to the field of alms. Síláditya was there with all his ministers and tributaries. Foremost amongst the tributary kings was his son-in-law Dhruvapatu, Raja of Vallabhi; he was lord of all the western Dekhan. Beside him was Kumára, Raja of Káma-rúpa, the modern Assam; he was lord of all eastern India. The armies of the three sovereigns were encamped round the field. The enormous multitude pitched their tents to the westward of the army of Dhruvapatu.[91]

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[89] Saint Hilaire, Bouddha, part ii., chap. i.

[90] The pice is a small copper coin. The lakh is a hundred thousand rupees, equivalent in round numbers to ten thousand pounds sterling.

Grand royal liberalities.

The festival commenced with the utmost pomp, and was characterized throughout by the largest toleration. It was consecrated to the honour and glory of Buddha; and yet due regard was shown to those heretics who worshipped the gods. On the first day a statue of Gótan a Buddha was installed in a pagoda. The same day the most precious things were distributed, the choicest food was served up in the dining houses, and flowers were scattered to the sound of harmonious music. On the second day a statue of the Sun god (Vishnu) was enthroned, and on the third day a statue of Iswara (Siva) was set up. On each of these two days the distribution was equal to one-half of the distribution which was made on the day that Buddha was installed. On the fourth day the offerings began. Twenty days were occupied in distributing gifts to the Srámans and Bráhmans, ten days in gifts to heretics, ten days in gifts to naked mendicants, and thirty days in gifts to the destitute, the fatherless, and the kinless. Altogether the festival lasted seventy-five days.[92]

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[91] Saint Hilaire. The arrangements here described are somewhat significant. The vast riches stored up in the field of happiness must have caused some anxiety before and during the distribution. The field itself was immediately to the west of the confluence of the two rivers; and was guarded by an army on every side. Síláditya was posted with his force on the north bank of the Ganges; his son-in-law Dhruvapatu was posted immediately to the west of the field, between the multitude and the field; whilst Kumára was posted on the south bank of the Jumna.

Political and religious character of the almsgiving.

Such was the scene that was witnessed by the famous Chinese Sráman; such was the extraordinary almsgiving by which the ancient sovereigns of India cultivated the field of happiness and sought to obtain heaven. Instead of hecatombs of victims being sacrificed to the gods, vast largesses were given to the pious and the poor; yet the mendicancy fostered by the alms was perhaps scarcely less to be deprecated than the animal sacrifices.

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[92] The remarks of M. Saint Hilaire upon the religious toleration of the old Hindú Rajas will find an echo in the hearts of all true philanthropists. But the religions of ancient India were not so free from the persecuting spirit as he appears to imagine. The Buddhist chronicle of the Mahawanso exhibits an animus against the Bráhmans, which is altogether foreign to the religion of Priyadarsi; and it is evident from the Puránas, which have been preserved in Peninsular India, that there was a cruel and deadly persecution of the Buddhists and Jains in ancient times. See especially the Madura Stalla Purána, chaps. 62, 63, of which an abstract translation is published in Taylor's Oriental Historical Manuscripts. Madras, 1835.

The whole festival, however, is invested with a political as well as a religious significance. The sovereign was evidently under the domination of monks and priests. He may have occasionally weakened their power by engaging them in religious controversies; but he deemed it politic to tolerate all and conciliate all. On these occasions he was supposed to distribute all the surplus accumulations of the imperial treasury. By so doing he recommended his rule to all the religious bodies, he silenced a clamorous democracy, and he removed all temptation to rebellion on the part of those robber adventurers, who, as in the case of Sandrokottos, sometimes overturned a dynasty and obtained possession of an empire. At the same time a strong religious feeling undoubtedly operated upon the mind of the sovereign. He gave away the whole of his riches. Nothing remained to him but his horses, elephants, and munitions of war, which were indispensable for the protection of his empire, and for the suppression of disaffection. He then divested himself of his robes, collar, earrings, bracelets, the garland of jewels in his diadem, the pearls which ornamented his neck, and the carbuncle which glittered upon his breast. He arrayed himself in old and tattered garments, and putting his hands together in a religious ecstasy, he cried out:—"All my anxiety for the safety of my riches has now passed away: I have expended them in the field of happiness, and have thus preserved them for ever: I trust that in all future existences I may continue to amass riches, and bestow them in alms, until I have acquired every divine faculty that a creature can desire."

Route of Hiouen-Thsang from Nálanda to the Bay of Bengal.

When Hiouen-Thsang left Nálanda he prepared to explore eastern Hindustan, and then to embark for the island of Ceylon, as Fah-Hian had done more than two centuries before: In the first instance, he proceeded through forests and mountains to the kingdom of Hiranya-parvata, which is supposed to be the same as Monghír. Next he passed through Champá, the modern Bhagulpore, where Buddhism was declining and Brahmanism flourishing; and Pundra-vardhana, probably Burdwan, where there were twenty Buddhist monasteries and a hundred Brahmanical temples. Next he proceeded to Kúma-rúpa, the modern Assam. Here Brahmanism alone flourished. The temples were numbered by hundreds and the worshippers by thousands. The king was a Bráhman, who bore the title of Kumára. He was not a Buddhist, but he was a feudatory of Síláditya, and in that capacity had attended his suzerain at the disputation at Kanouj, and the festival of alms-giving at Prayága. He was a great admirer of Hiouen-Thsang, and received him with every mark of respect. From Assam the Chinese pilgrim proceeded apparently to the Sunderbunds, and thence to Támralipti, or Tamluk, where Fah-Hian had embarked for Ceylon. At Tamluk he found ten monasteries and fifty temples, and was astonished at the vast trade carried on at this place by land and sea.

Route through the Dekhan and Peninsula to Conjeveram.

At Tamluk Hiouen-Thsang was induced to avoid the dangers of a voyage to Ceylon, and to proceed through the Dekhan and the Peninsula towards the southern coast, where he could easily reach the island by crossing the narrow strait of

Manaar. From this stage his description becomes more and more meagre, and it will suffice to mention the kingdoms which are best known to modern geography. Orissa contained a hundred monasteries and fifty temples; the inhabitants were tall, dark, and rude. Kalinga on the coast had ten monasteries and two hundred temples. Andhra had twenty monasteries and thirty temples; its capital was at Warangol. Chola, a name which still lives in the term Coromandel, was a desert of marsh and jungle; the monasteries were nearly all in ruins, but there were many temples, and numerous heretics, who went naked. Further south he passed through forests and desert plains, until he reached Dravida, and its capital of Kánchipura, the modern Conjeveram, not far from the modern city of Madras. This kingdom contained a hundred monasteries with ten thousand monks, and eighty temples with numerous naked heretics. At Conjeveram he heard that Ceylon was disturbed by internal wars. Accordingly he abandoned his idea of visiting the island.

Route along the western coast to the Indus.

Hiouen-Thsang had proceeded to Conjeveram along the eastern or Coromandel coast. In his return route he crossed the Peninsula to the western coast, known as the Malabar side; and then turned towards the north through Travancore and Malabar. Here he found the people illiterate, and devoted to nothing but gain. Most of the monasteries were in ruins; but there were hundreds of flourishing temples, and the usual swarms of naked heretics. He proceeded northward through a thick jungle into the kingdom of Konkana, where he found a hundred monasteries, and hundreds of temples. He then passed through another belt of desert and jungle, which was infested with robbers and wild beasts, and entered Maharashtra, which has already been described as occupied by a Rajpoot population. Here the heretical sects were very numerous. He crossed the Nerbudda river into Baróche, and found the people engaged in a large maritime trade, but illiterate and deceitful. Entering Málwa, he found the country as wealthy as Magadha; Brahmanism and Buddhism were both flourishing. Next he visited the great kingdom of Vallabhi, which was seated in Guzerat, but prevailed over a great part of the western Dekhan. It was under the dominion of Dhruva-patu, the son-in-law of Síláditya. This king was a zealous Buddhist, and celebrated the festival of expiation and alms-giving every year. Hiouen-Thsang entered Guzerat. He visited Ujain and Chittore, and found that Buddhism in both places was being superseded by Brahmanism. He then turned away westward, and passed through the gloomy desert of Marwar towards Scinde, where the king was a Súdra. Here Buddhism was in the ascendant. Proceeding, however, to Multán, he found that Buddhism had been superseded by the worship of the sun. It will be unnecessary to pursue his route further. He passed through unknown kingdoms, where Buddhism and Brahmanism seem to have been nearly balanced, and at last made his way over the Hindú Kúsh into his own country.[93]

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[93] For pious legends of Síláditya, and public disputations between Buddhists and Jains, see the Mahátma, or chronicle of the Satruniya mountain. Vallabhi was overthrown, apparently by Scythians, A. D. 770.—Forbes's Ras Malu, vol. i. chap. i. Tod's Rajasthan, vol. i. page 218.

CHAPTER VI.

THE HINDÚ DRAMA.

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Secular character of the Hindú Theatre.

THE theatre of the Hindús opens up a new insight into the civilization of ancient India. It forms a valuable supplement to the information furnished by Greek writers and Chinese pilgrims. Moreover the dramas are more reliable than the sacred books of either Buddhists or Bráhmans. They do not appear to have been compiled by pious sages, or to have been interpolated and garbled to any appreciable extent by an interested priesthood. Indeed they were composed for the amusement of the Kshatriyas; and consequently although they originated in a Brahmanical age, they are generally free from the Brahmanical exaggerations which mar the Mahá Bhárata and Rámáyana. The most valuable of them all in a historical point of view, is said to have been written by a Raja; and although the authorship may be doubted, yet there can be no question as to the secular character of the play.[1] But whether the dramatists were Bráhmans or Kshatriyas, they appear to have generally enjoyed the patronage of powerful Rajas of the dominant race; and their productions are thus generally devoid of religious or political significance. Occasionally personages and plots are taken from Hindú mythology and legend; but there is an absence of all intention to enforce any particular belief, worship, or religious rule; or to promulgate any political views beyond the ordinary maxims of Asiatic despotism. The dramatists were tolerably familiar with city life, but restrained in their representations of court scenes and characters. The sovereign is the centre of authority, and is hedged around with that respect and deference which is in accordance with Asiatic ideas of the divine right of kings. The Raja has generally two or more queens who are supposed to be strictly submissive to his will; and he is aided in the general administration by active and zealous ministers, whose so-called statesmanship appears to consist in artifice and intrigue. Strangely enough, the only representations of successful rebellion which are brought upon the stage in the dramas known to European readers, seem to refer more or less directly to that revolution, already noticed by Greek and Hindú writers, which placed Sandrokottos or Chandragupta on the throne. Religious teaching, as far as asceticism or monasticism are concerned, is recognized, but otherwise ignored. Bráhman priests and Buddhist mendicants appear as ordinary mortals; excepting that Bráhmans are invested with certain hereditary claims to respect, whilst the Buddhist mendicant is simply regarded as a religious beggar.

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[1] The drama is known as the "Toy-cart," and is said to have been composed by Raja Súdraka. It will be brought fully under review hereafter. Another secular play, known as the "Necklace," is ascribed to a Raja of Cashmere.

Social life of the Hindús revealed in the dramas.

The Hindú dramas, however, present something more than mere pictures of the external world. They open up a little of the inner life of ancient times. The Greeks only gazed upon the surface;—

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the streets, the bazaars, the processions, the Bráhmans and Srámans, and the administration of the city and camp. The inner life of the people was a dim unknown, even to the ambassador at the court of Sandrokottos. The masses moved to and fro before the curious foreigner like the waves of a sea, whose depths he could not explore, and whose storms and calms were alike a mystery. Again, the domestic life of the Hindús, and indeed of the world at large, was a sealed book to the Chinese Srámans, who were sworn to celibacy, and sought only to abstract themselves from all humanity. But there is at least one Hindú drama which discloses the interior of the dwelling-house and family, and brings forward individual men and women as types of different grades of society and phases of character. This drama is known as the "Toy-cart." It reveals much of the social life of the middle and higher classes, whilst it expresses the conventional ideas of right and wrong, of virtue and vice. It also furnishes occasional glimpses of that domestic life which Asiatics in general are so unwilling to unveil, and which the Greeks had been accustomed to respect as the inner sanctuary which no stranger should seek to enter.

World of the Hindú drama.

The curtain of the Hindú drama thus rises upon a world which is unfamiliar to the European. The scenes are oriental, but they are neither Jewish nor Arab; they are emphatically and essentially Hindú. There is nothing of the freedom of intercourse which exists in Europe. There are occasional glimpses of polygamous institutions which are foreign to European tastes; but scenes of impropriety or violence are never brought upon the stage; and consequently, whilst the auditor is free to draw his own inference, there is nothing to be seen that could offend modesty, or excite undue horror or alarm.

The "Toy-cart."

The most important of all the dramas, which have hitherto been rendered available to European readers, is the "Toy-cart," already mentioned.[2] This interesting play exhibits the greatest variety of scenes and characters, and moreover illustrates points of considerable historical interest. It contains the political element already alluded to in the shape of a successful rebellion. A Raja who does not appear upon the stage, but who is apparently obnoxious to the Bráhmans, is subverted by a cowherd, who obtains the throne by a popular revolution, which seems to be the work of a single day.[3] This incident is also valuable as a correct representation of the national character. To this day the political energy of the Hindús is occasionally expended in the passing passion of an hour, and then subsides into a cold contentment which may last for generations. The "Toy-cart" also contains a strange social element. The chief courtesan of the city falls in love with a virtuous Bráhman, named Chárudatta, who is already married to a virtuous wife, by whom he is the father of a beloved son. The wife observes this attachment between her husband and the courtesan without murmur or remonstrance, and, according to the drama, is ultimately reconciled to their union. This incident furnishes a curious illustration of that Hindú system of domestic repression, which causes much secret pain in many families. Caste rules have long since prevented the possibility of such a marriage between a Bráhman and a Sudrá, but otherwise the repression remains much the same. Sons bow to the will of fathers, and wives bow to the will of husbands, but they are like helpless worshippers, who carry resignation on their lips whilst a deep resentment is burning within.

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[2] The principal Sanskrit dramas have been translated by the late Professor W. H. Wilson in his "Theatre of the Hindús," 2 vols., 8vo, London, 1835. The celebrated drama of Sakúntalá has been translated by Sir William Jones and Professor Monier Williams.

[3] The scene is laid in the city of Ujain in Malwá, and not in Patali-putra, which was the capital of Sandrokottos or Chandra-gupta. The point, however, is of small importance, excepting that it seems to associate the rebellion with Asoka, who, according to Buddhist tradition, was appointed governor of Ujain. See *ante*, page 231.

Chárudatta the Brahman.

Chárudatta the Bráhman may be accepted as a type of a large class of Hindús. He was born to great wealth and respectability in the city of Ujain, and was happily married to a loving wife; but he reduced himself to poverty by a reckless prodigality. He was not a dissipated spendthrift, after the European fashion. He was not a gambler, a wine-bibber, or a libertine. On the contrary, he was virtuous and noble. He had squandered his riches with a profuse liberality, but he had spent the money more for the good of others than for his own benefit. He had given grand entertainments to friends, acquaintances, and dependents. He had beautified the city of Ujain with gardens, gates, viháras, temples, wells, and fountains. In a word, he had carried the virtue of benevolence, the religion of Dharma, to a vicious excess, and thus expended the whole of his hereditary riches. Henceforth he could only subsist on his wife's jewels, and on such alms and gifts as the people are accustomed to present to Bráhmans on particular occasions as an acknowledgment of their sacred character. He still lived in the family mansion, but it was stripped of all its ornaments, and the sounds of music and feasting were no longer to be heard within the walls. He himself had ceased to be the object of universal praise and adulation for his munificent generosity, and was utterly neglected by nearly all who had been formerly maintained by his bounty. This is the climax to the misery of a respectable Hindú. He is not disgraced by being poor, but by the loss of that consideration and respect which are so dear to orientals. Under such circumstances Chárudatta would have retired to a hermitage after the old Brahmanical fashion, but he could not abandon his wife and son, and consequently he was compelled to live on under daily mortifications, which seemed too heavy for him to bear.

Pursuits of Chárudatta.

Chárudatta was simply a Bráhman householder, without any claim to sanctity beyond that of caste. He was neither a preceptor, nor a sacrificer, nor an ascetic. He told his beads, and made occasional offerings to the gods, but this was nothing more than the daily usage of every Bráhman. He had one faithful friend named Maitreya, who alone remained to him of all his former dependents. Maitreya was a Bráhman, but was even less Brahmanical than Chárudatta. He was the trustworthy confidential adviser of the family; for being a Bráhman he is admitted to the society of the wife in the inner apartments, and is consulted by her as well as by her husband. Moreover, he acts the part of the wit or jester of the play. "In former days," he says, "I was accustomed to feast at pleasure in Chárudatta's dwelling, and then take my repose in

The wicked prince.

the gate-way; but now I wander about from house to house like a tame pigeon picking up the crumbs."

The wicked character of the play is a dissipated prince named Samasthanaka. He was a man of low and vicious propensities, without a single redeeming quality. He was selfish, cowardly, conceited, mean, unscrupulous, and offensively abusive. He affected some acquaintance with literature, but invariably provoked the laughter of the audience by his absurd mistakes and misquotations. This prince was not the son of the Raja of Ujain, but the brother of the queen. Great stress is laid on this relationship in old Hindú traditions.[4] The prince is supposed to exercise a paramount influence over his sister the queen, who in her turn domineers over her husband the Raja. The prince is generally accompanied by a personage known as the Vita, who seems to have united the characters of preceptor and parasite. The Vita is an obsequious companion, ever ready to pander to the pleasures of the prince, but refusing to become an accessary in any serious crime.

Reticence as regards the Raja.

The Raja of Ujain is named Pálaka, but he is kept entirely in the back-ground. Such silence on the part of a courtly dramatist seems to indicate that this particular sovereign was regarded as a tyrant. Had it been otherwise, the monarch would have been ushered upon the stage in all the pomp of royalty, as the bravest, wisest, and most majestic of Rajas. The rebellion was headed by a cowherd, who bears the name of Aryaka. His cause seems to be favoured by the dramatist, but his history will be brought under review hereafter.

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[4] See story of Kicháka, History, vol. i., Mahá Bhárata, chap. ix.

The courtesan heroine.

The heroine in the "Toy-cart" is Vasanta-séná, the chief courtesan of the city of Ujain. This anomalous position cannot be explained by reference to Greek usages or European ideas. In India almost every class of the community has its acknowledged head; and consequently it may be accepted as a literal fact that Vasanta-séná was nominally the head of the courtesans of Ujain. At the same time it appears from Hindú traditions that the prosperity of the luxurious cities of India often depended upon the attractions of the chief courtesan, who allured all the rich nobles and merchants from the surrounding countries. Thus a princess of rare beauty and accomplishments was sometimes appointed to fill such an equivocal position.[5] But it is obvious that a young and attractive female could scarcely possess the years and experience which would be necessary to exercise a controlling power over so difficult a class of the community. Accordingly in the Hindú drama the ideas of beauty and command are allotted to different individuals. Vasanta-séná was selected on account of her personal attractions, whilst the practical duties of the post were performed by her portly mother. Vasantaséná thus appears in the seclusion of her own apartments, in the company of her female attendants, or slave-girls; whilst the drama furnishes a glimpse of a palatial mansion with numerous apartments and extensive gardens, where youth might take pleasure in music, singing, or dancing, or lounge away the hours in the silken swings which were hanging from the trees.

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[5] Herodotus has preserved the tradition of a case of this character in ancient Egypt.—Herod., II., 121. See also description of the courtesans of Narsinya, *infra*, chap. ix.; and Appendix II., Buddhist Chronicles.

Character of the heroine.

The character of Vasanta-séná is perhaps not sufficiently obvious. According to the existing version of the drama, the plot simply involves the idea that the dissipated and despicable prince was in love with the chief courtesan; whilst the chief courtesan rejected all his advances, and was in love with the poor but virtuous Bráhman. But this incident is simple to childishness, and utterly devoid of moral meaning. It is impossible to presume that such was the conception of Vasanta-séná, in an age when the edicts of Asoka, the religion of Dharma, still prevailed amongst the masses. Possibly in an earlier form of the story a deeper meaning was involved. The persecution which Vasanta-séná suffered from the prince may have been an allegorical description of the miseries of her position; and her love for the Bráhman may have been in like manner symbolical of her desire to escape from the life of luxury, and obtain the protection of a pure but virtuous husband on whom she might bestow her superabundant wealth. It must, however, be admitted that this conjecture is scarcely supported by the action of the play in its present form. Strangely enough Vasanta-séná is represented as a faithful worshipper of Buddha; and it has already been seen that the teachings of Gótama Buddha seem to have been generally acceptable to ladies of her character and profession.

Incidents of the "Toy-cart."

The incidents of the drama of the "Toy-cart" can now be indicated with tolerable clearness. The first act opens with a scene in the immediate neighbourhood of the residence of Chárudatta. Vasanta-séná is being pursued by the prince and his parasitical tutor, the Vita. She is running away like a timid

The flying heroine.

deer. Her ear-rings, anklets, and bangles are jingling as she goes; whilst the tinkling zone round her slender waist is sparkling with starlike gems. She is as bright as the guardian goddess of the city, but her countenance is pale with terror. Her pursuers shout to her in vain. She disappears in the darkness in the hope of obtaining refuge in the house of Chárudatta. She finds the private entrance, but the door is shut. At this moment out comes Maitreya with a servant-girl, and in runs Vasanta-séná without being seen by any one.

The stupid prince.

Meantime the stupid brutal prince is seeking for the damsel in the dark, and making the most absurd mistakes. First he seizes the Vita. Next he falls foul of his own servant. Then he lays hold of the servant-girl who has come out with Maitreya. Finally he abuses Maitreya and Chárudatta in the most insulting language, and then retires.

The casket.

Vasanta-séná now makes her appearance inside the house. She declares that her pursuers only wanted her jewels, and she requests permission to leave the casket there for safety. Accordingly Maitreya takes charge of the casket, whilst Chárudatta escorts her to her own house.

The heroine at home.

The second act takes places in Vasanta-séná's own apartments. She is talking to her maid Madaniká, who appears to be her confident. Madaniká had accompanied her mistress to the gardens of Káma-deva's temple, where Vasanta-séná had first seen Chárudatta. Consequently the mistress talks to the maid about her love for the poor but virtuous Bráhman. Little incidents are here introduced to indicate her affection for Chárudatta. A gambler, who has lost more than he can pay, takes refuge in her house; and when she hears that he was formerly in the service of Chárudatta, she herself pays his debt. Strangely enough this ruined gambler takes the vows of a Buddhist mendicant, and enters the order of Sákya Muni. Next the keeper of Vasanta-séná's elephant runs in, and relates how the animal had broken his chain, and rushed through the streets of Ujain; but how he, the keeper, knocked down the unwieldy beast with an iron bar, and was rewarded by Chárudatta with the gift of a scented garment. Vasanta-séná accordingly takes the garment as a memento of the man she loves, and gives the keeper a rich jewel in return.[6]

Robbery of the casket.

The third act reverts to the house of Chárudatta. It is night, and Chárudatta and Maitreya are returning from a concert. Chárudatta is praising the beauty of the singing they have heard, whilst Maitreya is yawning from weariness. They retire to rest on couches which have been prepared for them in the outer apartment; and Maitreya as usual retains charge of the casket of Vasanta-séná. A burglar makes his appearance over the garden wall, and approaches the house. He is a dissipated Bráhman, named Servillaka, and is in love with Madaniká, the maid of Vasanta-séná. He is anxious to raise sufficient funds by robbery to purchase Madaniká from her mistress, in order to make her his wife. He tries to cut an opening in the wall of the house, where the brick-work is softened by recent damp, and the falling fragments would make no noise. He is also anxious to keep clear of any women. He finds a rat-hole, and widens it by extracting the bricks around it; and at last works his way into the house. He first opens the outer door from the inside, in order to provide a way of escape. He then enters the room where the two Bráhmans are lying, and turns his lamp upon their faces to ascertain if they are really asleep. He then looks around, and sees nothing but a drum, a tabor, a lute, pipes, and a few books. He had supposed the householder to be a rich man, but finds that he is only a poet or dancer. At this moment Maitreya is dreaming, and cries out in a half-conscious state:—"Master, they are breaking into the house: I can see the thief: Take charge of the casket!" The burglar hears the words, takes the casket from the unconscious hand of the Bráhman, and at once makes off with his prize.

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[6] This reference to the elephant of Vasanta-séná is somewhat curious. Arrian asserts that any woman in India would sacrifice her modesty if presented with an elephant (India, c. xvii.). This statement seems in itself to be unintelligible. Possibly the nomination to the post of chief courtesan was accompanied by the state present of an elephant, which no maiden could refuse.

Alarm of the wife.

Next morning the two Bráhmans discover the theft. Chárudatta is in agony at the loss, for he fears no one will believe that the casket has been really stolen. The maid-servant carries the news to the wife of Chárudatta, who is in the inner apartments. The poor lady is greatly alarmed lest her husband should lose his reputation. Her jewels are now nearly all exhausted. She has only one string of diamonds left, and she fears that Chárudatta will not accept it, as it was given to her before she left her mother's home. She sends for Maitreya, and induces him to palm it off on Chárudatta, as a gift which he had himself received in alms. The ruse is successful. Chárudatta accepts the diamonds, though with great reluctance; and he directs Maitreya to carry them to Vasanta-séná, with the strange apology that he had heedlessly lost the casket at play, and requested her to accept the diamonds in its stead.

Incidents in the house of the heroine.

The fourth act takes place in the house of Vasanta-séná. This lady is now talking with her maid Madaniká, respecting a portrait which she has procured of Chárudatta. At this juncture she receives a message from her mother, that the prince has sent a chariot for her with a number of costly presents; but she declines his offers with every expression of disgust.

Restoration of the casket.

The next visitor is Servillaka, the dissipated Bráhman and burglar. His first object is to see Madaniká alone; and this he accordingly accomplishes, although Vasanta-séná overhears the whole of the conversation. He inquires about the cost of her manumission, confesses that he has stolen the jewels, and requests her to take the casket to her mistress, and ascertain if it will suffice to purchase her freedom. Madaniká now discovers that he has stolen the very casket that Vasanta-séná had left with Chárudatta. She is horrified at the idea of her lover having committed robbery, but becomes half reconciled at knowing it was undertaken for her sake. At last she persuades Servillaka to appear before her mistress in the character of a messenger from Chárudatta, and to return the jewels in his name on the plea that his house is insecure. As Vasanta-séná has heard all that passed, she is prepared how to act. Accordingly when Servillaka presents himself, she takes the casket, and makes him a present of Madaniká. The enfranchised maiden is placed in a covered carriage drawn by oxen, and taken away by Servillaka to be his wife.

At this moment a loud proclamation is heard in the streets. A seer has prophesied that a cowherd, named Aryaka, will ascend the throne; and the Raja of Ujain has prevented disturbances by placing Aryaka in prison. Servillaka is a warm friend of Aryaka. He accordingly sends away his bride to the care of the chief of the city musicians, and hastens off to effect, if possible, the release of Aryaka.

Message of Maitreya.

The plot now begins to be tedious, although it is perfectly adapted to Hindú tastes. Maitreya arrives at the house of Vasanta-séná, and delivers his message, and apologizes for the loss of the casket at play, and makes over the diamonds.[7] The lady, being already in possession of the casket, knows that the gambling story is a falsehood, and accordingly accepts the diamonds with a smile. She then promises to visit Chárudatta in the evening, and Maitreya departs with this message in high displeasure.

Meeting of the hero and heroine.

The fifth act reverts to the house of Chárudatta. Maitreya enters, and vents his spleen against Vasanta-séná. She had pounced upon the diamonds without the slightest compunction, and had not deigned to offer him any refreshment.[8] Moreover, her attendant damsels had been mightily amused, and seemed to have been laughing at him. Presently Vasanta-séná is announced. She enters splendidly dressed, and throws flowers at Chárudatta, and rallies him upon his gambling. She then produces the stolen casket. Vasanta-séná and Chárudatta now understand each other. The rain descends in torrents, and Vasanta-séná remains all night in the inner apartments.

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[7] As Maitreya approaches the house he is supposed to express the utmost admiration, and dilates upon its magnificence with apparent exaggeration. It is said to have consisted of eight courts or quadrangles. The entrance was adorned with flags and garlands. The first quadrangle was surrounded by white palaces, having upper apartments with windows looking in the streets below. The second court was occupied with stables for oxen and horses. The third was surrounded with seats, and formed a place of resort for all the young men of Ujain. The fourth was gay with singing and dancing girls, whilst other damsels were reading plays and poems. The fifth court was the kitchen, sending forth delicious odours. The sixth court was filled with working jewellers, whilst damsels and their gallants were talking, laughing, and drinking wine. The seventh court was an aviary. In the eighth court the mother and brother of Vasanta-séná were sitting. The interview between Maitreya and Vasanta-séná took place in the garden.

The courtesan and the wife.

The sixth act opens with some commotion. Vasanta-séná awakes in the house of her lover, and is told that Chárudatta has gone away to a public garden, and left a covered bullock-carriage for her to follow him. She is naturally afraid that she has caused some vexation in the family. She tries to soften matters by sending the string of diamonds to the wife of Chárudatta, with the message that she is the handmaid of Chárudatta, and has consequently become her slave. The injured matron refuses to accept the gift, and declares that she values no ornament except her husband. Vasanta-séná falls back upon the little son of Chárudatta. The lad is crying over his toy-cart, because it is made of pottery, whereas he wants one of gold. She fills his cart with jewels, and tells him to buy a golden cart. She then leaves the house in the bullock-carriage. The wife of Chárudatta is evidently aware of her husband's amour, and that he will spend the day with her rival in the pleasure-garden without the city. But she gives vent to no expression of her feelings. She merely takes the jewels out of the toy-cart, and requests Maitreya to return them to Vasanta-séná. This incident is invested with a tragical interest in the after-part of the play.

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[8] This complaint seems to indicate a period when Bráhmans would take food from the hands of a Sudrá. This was the case in the time of Alexander the Great. See *ante*, page 169.

Fatal mistake of the heroine.

It now transpires that Vasanta-séná has gone away in the wrong vehicle. Instead of entering the carriage of Chárudatta whom she loved, she had entered that of the prince whom she detested. The cause of this mistake easily appears upon the stage. She had spent some time in dressing, and Chárudatta's coachman had taken advantage of the delay to drive away from the door to procure some cushions. Meantime the prince walks to his own garden, and directs his boy to follow him with the bullock-carriage, in order to bring him back to the city when the day is hot. The street, however, is choked with carts, and the boy halts at the door of Chárudatta's house in order to drive them away. Vasanta-séná comes out of the house, sees the prince's carriage all ready, and enters it without hesitation, and is driven off to the garden with the full expectation of seeing no one but Chárudatta.

Escape of Aryaka the rebel.

Another mistake occurs as regards Chárudatta's carriage. His coachman returns to the door of the house, and patiently awaits the coming of the lady. Meantime Aryaka, the cowherd, had escaped from prison, and is looking for a place of refuge. Seeing the carriage, he at once enters it, and is driven away to the garden where Chárudatta is expecting the lady. The coachman hears the clank of his fetters, but thinks it is the jingling of Vasanta-séná's anklets. Aryaka, however, has a very narrow escape. The city police are looking out for him in all directions. Two captains of the guard stop the carriage, and the coachman explains that he is driving Vasanta-séná to Chárudatta. Fortunately the two captains quarrel. One wishes to let the carriage pass without examination, the other insists upon inspecting it. The first captain looks in, sees Aryaka, takes compassion on the fugitive, and bids the coachman drive on. The second captain insists upon his right to inspect the carriage likewise, but is thrown down and kicked by his comrade, and finally makes off to lay his complaint before the authorities.

The pleasure-garden.

The seventh act takes place in the pleasure-garden, where Chárudatta is awaiting the arrival of his beloved Vasanta-séná. He is wondering at the delay when the carriage arrives with Aryaka. The cowherd throws himself upon the protection of the Bráhman, and is assured of safety. Chárudatta orders his fetters to be removed, and sends him away in the carriage.

The prince and the heroine: the murder.

The eighth act opens in the same garden, but in the place where the prince, accompanied by the obsequious Vita, is waiting for the arrival of his own carriage to carry him back to the city. He is extremely angry at the delay, for he is ravenous for breakfast, and the sun is too hot for him to walk to his palace in the city. At this moment a Buddhist mendicant makes his appearance, and begins to wash his yellow robes in a pond. He is the man who had been originally a servant of Chárudatta; then a ruined gambler saved by the bounty of Vasanta-séná, and now a mendicant who had taken the monastic vows. The dissipated prince appears to have a spite against Srámans as well as Bráhmans. He had grievously insulted Maitreya and Chárudatta in the first act of the drama, and he now began to abuse the Sráman for washing his garments in the pond. He stupidly asks why he had not been a Sráman from his birth, and beats him and threatens to slit his nose. The holy man makes no reply, but simply calls out, "Glory to Buddha!" At last he is permitted to go. At this moment the prince's carriage comes up with the unconscious Vasanta-séná. The boy who drives suddenly professes to be in a great terror. He has seen the lady in his carriage, and declares she must be a demon. The Vita looks in, and the whole matter is explained. Vasanta-séná discovers that she has committed a fatal error in entering the carriage of her persecutor. She implores the protection of the Vita, but he is powerless to defend her. Meantime the prince is in a state of foolish exultation. He tries to propitiate Vasanta-séná, but she shrinks from him with abhorrence. He orders his boy to go outside the garden and wait for him there. He induces the Vita to retire on the plea, that in his absence the courtesan will cease to be coy. Again he urges his suit, again he is spurned. He now falls into an uncontrollable fury, and throws the lady down and strangles her.[9] The Vita returns and is horrified at the idea that a young and innocent woman has been basely murdered. Indeed, the murder of a woman is one of the most heinous crimes in the Hindú code, and belongs to the same category as the murder of a Bráhman. But the Vita is in a still greater agony of terror when the false-hearted prince turns upon him, and charges him with having committed the atrocity. He sees at once that his own life is in imminent danger, whilst he will be universally execrated as the vilest of mankind. Accordingly he hastily leaves the garden to take a part in the rebellion of Aryaka.

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[9] In the original drama, which is extremely tedious, the prince is said to have called upon the Vita to murder Vasanta-séná. The Vita is horrified at the proposal. In vain the prince declares that no one would witness the act; the Vita replies, "All nature would behold the crime;—the genii of the grove, the sun, the moon, the winds, the vault of heaven, the firm-set earth, the mighty Yama who judged the dead, and the conscious soul." The passage is significant as showing how the law of merits and demerits was brought into conformity with the old nature-worship of the Vedic hymns.

The boy-coachman.

At this crisis the driver returns to the garden. He is only a boy, and the slave of his master, but he does not hesitate to denounce the horrible deed which the prince has perpetrated. The prince tries to conciliate him with presents, but the boy refuses to accept them. The prince then directs him to drive the carriage back to the palace.

The heroine saved.

But Vasanta-séná is not dead. Had she been really murdered the deed would not have been performed upon the stage. The Buddhist mendicant returns to the garden, and discovers that his benefactress is lying on the grass in a deep stupor. He brings water which recovers her, and being prevented by his vows from rendering any further assistance to a woman, he directs her to a Buddhist convent which is near at hand, where she will find a holy sister to minister to her needs.

Plot of the prince.

Meantime the prince has hatched a plot for concealing his crime, and for bringing the guilt home to his detested rival, the virtuous Bráhman Chárudatta. He places his slave-boy in fetters, and confines him in the upper apartments of his palace. He then proceeds to the public court of justice, to enter a charge of murder against Chárudatta.

The court of justice.

The ninth act takes place in the court of justice, which is held in the public hall of the city. This court appears to be a Hindú institution. The Judge is a Bráhman. He is assisted by the Provost, or head of the merchants; and by a Recorder, or scribe, who writes down all the charges and the evidence. The duty of the court is confined to the investigation of facts. It is supposed to ascertain whether the party accused is guilty or not guilty; and then to refer the proceedings to the Raja, who alone pronounces sentence. In the course of the trial it will be seen that the Judge is inclined to assert the authority and independence of his court, but that he is unwilling to offend the prince, who is supposed to exercise indirectly a paramount influence over the Raja. It will also be seen that he is inclined to favour Chárudatta the Bráhman; partly, perhaps, from caste sympathies, and partly because the character of the prince is well known to be despicable, whilst that of Chárudatta stands high in public estimation.

Chárudatta charged with the murder.

The case proceeds in regular form. The prince announces that he has a plaint to enter. The Judge proposes to postpone the cause because other business is pressing; but the prince appeals to his relationship to the Raja, and the Judge deems it expedient to begin the investigation. The prince then states that Vasanta-séná has been strangled in the garden on account of her jewels; he infers these circumstances from having seen the dead body in the garden with the neck much swollen, and the dress divested of its ornaments. The mother of Vasanta-séná is then summoned by the court. She is ignorant of what has befallen her daughter, and answers the questions of the court precisely as might have been expected from a woman of her profession. She readily admits that her daughter went to the house of a friend, but hesitates to name the friend. The court, however, insists, and the woman at length names Chárudatta, the son of Sagaradatta, and grandson of the Provost Vinayadatta. The prince then charges Chárudatta with having committed the murder. The Provost on the bench declares that it is impossible for Chárudatta to be a criminal. The Judge, however, directs the Recorder to write down the evidence and the charge, and despatches a polite summons to Chárudatta to attend the court. After some delay Chárudatta appears. He is unconscious of what has happened, and is anxious to conceal his acquaintance with a courtesan. At length on being pressed he admits that the lady is his friend, but adds that he does not habitually seek such society. He, however, does not know what has become of Vasantaséná; she had paid him a visit, and gone away, as he supposed, to her own dwelling. On this admission the prince repeats the charge of murder against Chárudatta. The Judge refuses to believe that a man, who had exhausted his fortune in beautifying the city, could have murdered a woman for the sake of plunder. But the prince sharply rebukes him by declaring that the duty of a Judge is to try the cause and not to defend the criminal.

Captain of the guard.

Another link is now added to the chain of circumstantial evidence against Chárudàtta. The captain of the guard, who had been prevented from inspecting the carriage of Chárudatta, appears to complain of the treatment he had received from his comrade. He mentions the quarrel about the carriage. He says that the coachman was driving Vasanta-séná to the garden to meet Chárudatta. The Judge here postpones further inquiry into his complaint, and despatches him to the garden, to ascertain if the body of the lady is still there. After a certain interval the captain returns with the information that he has found female hair, and traced the marks of female hands and feet, but that the body has disappeared.

Conviction of Chárudatta.

The case against Chárudatta is now very strong; but another incident seems to place his guilt beyond a doubt. It will be remembered that his wife had commissioned Maitreya to carry back to Vasanta-séná the jewels which the courtesan had left in the child's toy-coat. Maitreya accordingly takes the jewels in his girdle, and sets out for the house of Vasanta-séná, but on his way he wanders into the public hall. Here he listens to the horrible accusation which the prince has brought against his friend. In his wrath he assails the prince, and during the struggle the jewels drop from his girdle. In a moment they are recognized as the jewels of Vasanta-séná. This points to the conclusion that Vasanta-séná has been murdered for the sake of her jewels. The accumulation of evidence leads to the conviction of the accused. The Judge reports to the Raja that Chárudatta has been found guilty of the robbery and murder. At the same time he reminds the Raja that the condemned man is a Bráhman, and that consequently he cannot be executed, nor his property confiscated, but that he may be banished from the realm. Raja Pálaka, however, is not inclined to show favour to the

Bráhmans. He orders that Chárudatta should be put to death by impalement; and he issues special instructions that the condemned man should be led to the place of execution with the stolen jewels hanging round his neck, whilst his crime is proclaimed by beat of drum.

Preparations for the execution.

The tenth and last act takes place on the road to the place of execution, which is situated in the burning-place without the city. Chárudatta appears decorated with garlands, like a victim being led to the sacrifice. On his shoulder he carries the stake. He is attended by two executioners, who belong to the lowest class of outcastes. They are named Chándálas, and their very touch is a horrible pollution. The women of Ujain are weeping all around, as Chárudatta takes farewell of his little son. The sad procession moves on whilst one of the Chándálas proclaims the crime and the sentence by beat of drum. Presently the procession passes the palace, where the black-hearted prince is gloating over the sufferings of the innocent Bráhman. But in a room on the upper story is the lad who had driven Vasanta-séná to the presence of the prince, and who knows that she had been strangled by his wicked master. The boy shouts aloud that the prince is the murderer, but no one heeds him. Suddenly he breaks his chain, and leaps from the balcony, crying out that Chárudatta is innocent. The Chándálas stop to listen to the lad. The crowd eagerly believe his evidence, and cry out that the prince is the murderer. The prince sees that his life is in peril, and rushes from the palace into the street. He declares that the boy is bringing a false charge because he had been punished for theft; and he reminds the mob that the boy cannot be believed because he is a slave. This indeed proves to be the law; the evidence of a slave cannot be received. The mob is excited, but does nothing; and the Chándálas with their prisoner move slowly and reluctantly along, followed by the prince, who thirsts more than ever for the death of his victim.

The rescue.

The last station is reached; the drum is beaten, and the proclamation is made for the last time. The pathos has reached its climax, for an innocent Bráhman is preparing for a death of excruciating agony. At this moment the beautiful Vasanta-séná, the pride and glory of the whole city, suddenly rushes through the crowd, and throws herself into the arms of Chárudatta. A scene of overwrought excitement follows, which must be left to the imagination. Some of the crowd run off to carry the news to the Raja. The Chándálas arrest the prince as a perjurer and would-be murderer. But the public agitation is raised to a still higher pitch by loud shouts in the distance:—"Victory to Aryaka! The Raja is slain, and Aryaka ascends the throne of Pálaka." The cowardly prince is quaking with terror, and throws himself at the feet of Chárudatta shrieking for mercy. The mob shout for his immediate execution. Chárudatta, however, interposes, and the villain is suffered to wander forth as a vagabond wherever he will.

The last scene.

The last scene must be indicated, if only to exhibit the vast gulf which separates the European from the Hindú. The wretched wife of Chárudatta is discovered on the eve of committing herself to the funeral pile, in order that she may accompany her murdered lord to another world. The husband saves his wife, and takes her to his embrace; and here according to all European ideas of propriety the curtain ought to fall. Certainly no European poet or dramatist would imagine that at such a solemn moment of re-union a courtesan could appear between the married pair. But Vasanta-séná is present, radiant with charms. The Hindú wife beholds her, and knows that her husband loves the courtesan. Shakespeare himself would have been unable to reconcile his audience to the scene. Yet the wife approaches the courtesan, with the crushed spirit of a Hindú woman, and says:—"Welcome, happy sister!" The veil is thrown over Vasanta-séná. Henceforth she ceases to be a courtesan, and is secluded for the remainder of her days in the inner apartments of Chárudatta.

Aryaka ascends the throne.

Aryaka the cowherd thus ascends the throne of Ujain, and distributes his rewards. The Buddhist mendicant is made chief of all the viharas in Ujain. The slave-boy of the prince obtains his freedom. The two Chándálas are appointed heads of their tribe. Lastly the captain, who connived at the escape of Aryaka, is raised to the post of Kotwal or chief over all the police of the city.

Review of the "Toy-cart."

It would be vain to attempt to judge the foregoing drama by a European standard. The main interest of an ordinary plot is altogether wanting, namely, the passion which draws together a youth and maiden, and terminates in a happy marriage, or tragical denouement. The chief interest in the play turns upon the accumulation of circumstantial evidence against Chárudatta, and the sudden discovery of his innocence on the eve of his execution.

But in order to realize the scenes in all their oriental colouring, the hot rays of an Indian sun must be seen in the streets and gardens, and the lassitude of Indian life must be taken into consideration. The characters must also appear in Hindú costume, and surrounded by Hindú belongings. Chárudatta and Maitreya, the Judges on the bench, and all the officers of the court, are not Europeans of fair complexion, but brown Asiatics arrayed in white silk or cotton; or perhaps bare to the waist, with a nondescript petticoat below. The Bráhman burglar who creeps through the house-wall is probably naked, excepting that a cloth is round his loins, and his whole body is smeared with oil. The wife of Chárudatta is most likely a faded matron in coloured muslin; whilst the courtesan is a slender-waisted damsel of golden complexion, radiant in silks and jewels. The want of moral perception which pervades the drama is still one of the defects in the national character. Falsehood is passed over with a smile. The robbery of the casket is almost a joke; although some horror of the theft is expressed in strained and artificial language. The visits to the gardens in the cool air of early morning is one of the conditions of Indian life; whilst the stupid carelessness of the two coachmen, in driving off without knowing who is inside their respective carriages, will be familiar to the experience of most European residents in India.

Historical element in the play.

The historical element of the play is of comparatively small importance. Ujain is famous in tradition, but nothing is known of its real annals. Asoka is said to have been appointed to the government of Ujain in his early youth, but the statement only

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rests on the dubious authority of the Buddhist chronicles.[10] The rebellion which places Aryaka upon the throne seems to be altogether wanting in political meaning. It is one of those semi-religious outbreaks, which are not unfrequent in India, and which are sometimes followed by dangerous disturbances. It originated in the foolish prophecy of some holy man, which proved to be disastrous because it was implicitly believed. To this day the people of India, or rather of some parts of India, are subject to strange panics, which seem to drive them to a revolt; but if the rising is promptly checked it rapidly subsides into a dead calm. In the present case the cowherd who had been promised the kingdom was placed in confinement, but he effected his escape and was joined by all the malcontents of the city. Before the day is out the Raja is slain, and Aryaka ascends the throne, and then the play is over.

The "Signet of the Minister;" a political drama.

The historical drama next in importance to the "Toy-cart" is the one known as the "Signet of the Minister." It not only represents a similar political revolution, but it refers by name to the overthrow and death of the Raja of Patali-putra, named Nanda; and to the reign of Chandragupta, the Sandrokottos of the Greeks, who succeeded Nanda on the throne.[11] There is, however, an artificial air of unreality about the drama, and an absence of that varied life which characterizes the "Toy-cart." Only one woman appears on the stage throughout the play, and she is there only for a few moments whilst her husband is being led to execution, from which, like Chárudatta, he is ultimately saved. The plot is nothing more than a series of bewildering intrigues between the two ministers of two rival Rajas; and the drama is thus mainly valuable as illustrating the ideas of statesmanship which are entertained by orientals. It will therefore suffice to indicate the bare outline, without descending to tedious and perplexing details.

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[10] See *ante*, page 231, note.

[11] In the Buddhist chronicles Chandragupta is described as a cowherd of princely origin; and this account perhaps is only another version of the story of Aryaka. See Appendix II., Buddhist chronicles.

Story of the play.

It appears that a dynasty of Rajas, known as the Nandas, reigned over the ancient empire of Magadha, of which the city of Patali-putra is the capital. The last of the Nanda Rajas seems to have been offended by a Bráhman named Chánakya, and finally turned him ignominiously out of the palace. In return the Bráhman pronounced a curse against the Raja. The Bráhman then formed a plan for overthrowing the Nanda Raja, and placing an obscure member of the family, named Chandragupta, on the throne of Magadha. With this object he secured the services of a powerful Raja of the mountain tribes, named Párvatika, by the promise of half the empire; and then marched a large irregular army against Patali-putra, and took possession of the capital.

It soon appears that the contest was not so much between Chandragupta and Nanda, as between their respective ministers. Rákshasa is the hereditary minister of Nanda, and Chánakya the Bráhman is the minister of Chandragupta. Rákshasa maintained an obstinate resistance, but chiefly tried to destroy Chandragupta by assassination. Such, however, was the consummate skill of Chánakya that he not only warded off every blow, but directed it against some individual whose interests were opposed to those of Chandragupta. Thus whilst Rákshasa incurred the odium, Chandragupta reaped the advantage of every murder. Rákshasa employed a woman to give poison to Chandragupta, but she gave it to Párvatika, and thus removed an inconvenient claimant to half the empire. Rákshasa again employed an architect to let an archway fall on Chandragupta; the archway fell, but it crushed a son of Párvatika who had inherited his father's claim.

At the opening of the drama, Raja Nanda has been slain, and Rákshasa has escaped from the capital. The wife and children of Rákshasa still remain in the city under the charge of a wealthy jeweller, named Chandana Dás, who proves throughout a faithful friend of the minister. Rákshasa is joined by a surviving son of Párvatika, named Malayaketu, to whom he has promised the whole of the empire. Five great Rajas have also marched armies to his assistance, and even the chieftains of Chandragupta have deserted their master to support the cause of the allies.

Plot against plot.

The game was now one of plot against plot between Chánakya and Rákshasa, assisted by their respective spies, who play a variety of extraordinary characters. One is a snake-charmer. Another is a kind of religious showman, who wanders about with pictures of Yama, and sings barbarous hymns in his praise. A third is a Buddhist mendicant; whilst a fourth is a wandering minstrel. Chánakya discovers that Chandana Dás is protecting the wife and family of Rákshasa, and demands their surrender. Chandana Dás refuses to point out their hiding-place, and accordingly Chánakya imprisons him, and threatens to impale him in the hope that Rákshasa will come forward and save his friend. Chánakya pretends to quarrel with Chandragupta, in the hope that Rákshasa may be thereby drawn to the capital. Rákshasa, on his part, sends a minstrel to sing verses in the hearing of Chandragupta, which will warn him of the ambitious designs of his minister. Rákshasa hears that the quarrel has reached such a pitch, that Chánakya has delivered up the dagger of office. He accordingly proposes to the confederate Rajas that they should immediately march upon the capital. But meantime Chánakya has succeeded in implanting a spirit of mutual suspicion amongst the allies. The chieftains who had nominally deserted Chandragupta were carrying out the designs of Chánakya. Malayaketu is induced to believe that Rákshasa was the real murderer of his father. Forged letters are found upon a spy, which bear the seal of Rákshasa, and are addressed to Chandragupta. They report that the five great Rajas are prepared to join the cause of Chandragupta, and that Rákshasa will follow their example provided that Chánakya is banished from the realm.

Rákshasa outwitted.

When Rákshasa proposed to march on the capital, Malayaketu asks to see the order of march. The mountain prince then discovers that his own troops are to be surrounded by the armies of the five allies, and naturally infers that Rákshasa has made his arrangement with the view of taking him prisoner, and carrying him to Chandragupta. He arrests the five treacherous Rajas, and puts them to death at once. He denounces Rákshasa as the murderer of his father. He then marches on to Patali-putra, but on his way he is seized by the chiefs of Chandragupta, and carried prisoner to the capital, where the whole army falls into the hands of Chánakya. Meantime Rákshasa hastens to Patali-putra, and is just in time to prevent the execution of his friend by surrendering himself to Chandragupta.

Conclusion of the play.

The strangest part of the drama is that all the bewildering plots of Chánakya have but one simple object in view. He is supposed to be so deeply impressed with the loyalty of Rákshasa towards the deceased dynasty, that he is anxious that Rákshasa should become the hereditary minister of Chandragupta, whilst he himself retires from the post. It must seem to a European that such an object might easily have been effected by negotiation; but amongst orientals such an attempt would have been regarded as an artifice, and Rákshasa would have suspected that the only object in making the offer was to obtain possession of his person. At the conclusion of the play Rákshasa is informed that unless he accepts the dagger of office, the life of Chandana Dás cannot be saved. Accordingly he takes the dagger and obtains the release of Malayaketu, whilst Chánakya the Bráhman retires from the scene.

Dark side of Hindú character.

It is unnecessary to criticize the plot of such a play. The only redeeming incident throughout is the faithfulness of Chandana Dás to his former patron, the hereditary minister. The drama is valuable as an illustration of the more prominent defects in the Hindú character; but as a picture of life and manners it is comparatively worthless. It should, however, be added that these defects are chiefly to be found in courts and cities, and that they ought not to be charged against the masses of the Hindú population.

"Sakúntalá, or the Lost Ring."

A far more pleasing drama, although less historical, is that of "Sakúntalá, or the Lost Ring."[12] This drama furnishes a pretty picture of ancient India, and is far more natural and emotional than the "Signet of the Minister," but there is no diversity or depth of character. The simplicity of ancient times is reproduced by the imagination of the poet in a Brahmanical form, but there is more sentiment than passion, and indeed the play is more of an idyl than a drama.

Hunting scene.

The first act opens in the forest with a hunting scene, which is borrowed from the heroic age. Raja Dushyanta stands in his chariot with bow and arrows in his hand, whilst his charioteer is driving through the jungle in chase of an antelope. The Raja fixes an arrow to his string, and is about to draw, when some Bráhmans rush from a neighbouring hermitage and entreat him not to kill the deer. He returns the arrow to his quiver, and receives the blessing of the Bráhmans. He learns that Kanwa, the holy sage who is head of the hermitage, is absent on a religious pilgrimage; but he is told that Sakúntalá, the daughter of the sage, has been commissioned to entertain all visitors. Accordingly, at the request of the Bráhmans, he alights from his chariot and proceeds towards the hermitage.

According to Greek travellers the Bráhmans

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[12] The drama of Sakúntalá is perhaps better known to European readers than any other Sanskrit composition. It was composed by the poet Kálidása, and to this day is held by the Hindús in the highest estimation. It was translated into English in the last century by Sir William Jones, and elicited the unbounded praise of Goëthe, Schlegel, and Humboldt. It has more recently been translated into graceful verse and prose by Professor Monier Williams, and adorned with charming illustrations drawn from real life and scenery in India.

A Bráhman hermitage.

dwelt in groves in the neighbourhood of cities, where they led lives of abstinence and celibacy, and disdained the use of clothing. The scene in the play accords with the Greek descriptions, excepting that there is no nakedness. Again, the Greek travellers mention the presence of women in Bráhman hermitages, but state that they led lives of piety and celibacy like the hermits. It will be seen that Sakúntalá, with two companions of her own age, live after a somewhat different fashion; but all three, and indeed all the women of the hermitage, are under the religious charge of a holy matron, or lady superior, named Gautamí.

Sakúntalá and her companions.

The Raja enters the hermitage, and sees Sakúntalá and her two companions in the distance, carrying water-pots to water the shrubs. She is everything that is lovely in a Hindú woman; fair and graceful, full-bosomed, and slender-waisted. The Raja conceals himself behind a tree to overhear their conversation, but he is rapidly becoming enamoured. The damsels are talking gaily. They see a jasmine creeper clinging to a mango tree, like a young bride clinging to her husband. Sakúntalá is rallied with looking at the jasmine, as if she too wanted a bridegroom. She replies that the thought exists only in the mind of the speaker.

The royal lover.

The Raja now advances. He represents himself as the royal officer appointed to see that the Bráhmans of the hermitage are not hindered in the performance of their sacrificial rites. He inquires after Sakúntalá, and is told by her companions that she is only an adopted daughter of Kanwa; that she is the offspring of an amour between a Kshatriya and a celestial nymph, that she had been abandoned in infancy, and brought up in the hermitage. He also learns that although Sakúntalá performs religious rites, she is bound by no vows, and that in due course Kanwa will give her to a husband. Sakúntalá pretends to be angry at these disclosures, and proposes to lay a complaint before Gautamí; but she is evidently unwilling to leave the handsome stranger. A little by-play occurs, sufficient to indicate to the audience that Sakúntalá and the Raja have fallen in love with each other. Meantime the quiet of the hermitage is disturbed by the royal retinue; and the Raja goes out to direct his attendants to encamp in the neighbourhood.

The Bráhman jester.

The second act opens in a plain on the skirt of the jungle. A Bráhman enters, named Máthavya, who is even more of a jester than Maitreya. He has accompanied the Raja in his hunting expedition, and is full of serio-comic complaints. He is tired out with wandering from jungle to jungle, doing nothing but hunt deer, boars, and tigers. He has had nothing to drink but bad water, and nothing to eat but roast game. At night he is too weary to sleep; and should he at last fall into a slumber, he is awakened at early dawn by the din of beaters and huntsmen. Meantime the Raja has fallen in love with a hermit's daughter, and shows no signs of leaving the jungle and returning to his capital.

The Raja and his Amazons.

Raja Dushyanta now enters, followed by a retinue of Yavana women, after the fashion described by the Greeks, with bows in their hands, and wearing garlands of wild flowers. He is entreated by Máthavya to cease from hunting for a day, and he gladly complies. He orders the beaters to be recalled, and prohibits any noise or disturbance in the neighbourhood of the hermitage. Finally he dismisses the women, and talks to Máthavya respecting Sakúntalá. Two hermits now appear to ask his protection against certain demons, who are obstructing their sacrificial rites. The Raja orders his chariot, but at this moment he receives a summons from his mother to return to his capital. He directs Máthavya to go in his stead. He remembers, however, that the queens in his palace would be inquisitive respecting his proceedings, and assures the Bráhman that he had only jested in speaking of his love for Sakúntalá.

The third act opens in a grove. Raja Dushyanta has compelled the demons to retreat, and is now pondering over his love for Sakúntalá. He sees her in a fainting state, attended by her two companions; and he hears her confess to the other girls that she is in love with himself. An explanation ensues, in which Sakúntalá is considerably assisted by the two damsels. The Raja promises that his other queens shall never rival her in his affections. He presses for an immediate marriage, like the Gandharva marriages in the heaven of Indra, in which no rites are performed, but the pair simply vow mutual allegiance. She pleads the necessity for consulting her companions.

The Gandharva marriage.

In the interval between the third and fourth acts the union is supposed to have taken place. The Raja has given Sakúntalá a marriage-ring, on which his name is engraved. But the companions of Sakúntalá have their doubts. The Raja has returned to his capital, promising to send his minister for Sakúntalá; but he may forget her altogether in the society of his other consorts. They expect, however, that Kanwa will approve of the marriage. At this point in the story a Brahmanical incident is introduced, which mars the plot. Sakúntalá inadvertently offends an irascible sage, named Durvásas, who is paying a visit to the hermitage. In return he pronounces a curse, that her husband should forget her until he saw the ring again.

The curse.

The fourth act opens in the neighbourhood of the hermitage. Kanwa has returned from the pilgrimage. He fully approves of the union, and exults in the fact that Sakúntalá is about to become a mother. He proposes to send her under a suitable escort to her royal husband at the capital. She takes an affectionate farewell of the companions and scenes of her girlhood; and then leaves the hermitage in charge of Gautamí and a deputation of hermits.

The parting.

The fifth act opens in a room in the palace of the old capital at Hastinápur. Raja Dushyanta is sitting with the Bráhman jester. One of the queens is heard in the distance, singing some significant strains to the effect that the Raja has lately neglected her for the society of one of his other queens. The Raja sends the Bráhman to tell her that he has taken the reproof as it was intended; but Máthavya rather hesitates to enter the presence of a jealous lady. At this point the deputation of hermits arrives with Sakúntalá. They are ushered into the consecrated fire-chamber, where they are received into the royal presence. The Raja admires the graceful form of Sakúntalá, but cannot remember her. The hermits deliver a message from Kanwa, sanctioning the marriage, and delivering Sakúntalá to his charge. The Raja denies having ever been united to her. Gautamí unveils the face of Sakúntalá, but the Raja

Sakúntalá renounced.

fails to recall her features. She is beautiful and tempting, but she is about to become a mother, and must therefore be another man's wife, and he consequently refuses to take her. Sakúntalá tries to produce the ring, but discovers to her horror that she has lost it. She has, in fact, dropped it in the Ganges whilst in the act of worship. She covers her face with a mantle and bursts into tears. She is in a painful position, which can only be understood by a familiarity with Hindú ideas. If she is what the Raja proclaims her to be, she can never be received back in her father's house and home. If, on the contrary, she had been united to the Raja, she could not render herself independent of her lord; even if he condemned her to the lot of a handmaid in his household, she must accept the position. The Raja, however, refuses to accept another man's wife on any terms. At length he consults his family priest, who offers her an asylum in his house until her child is born. But at this juncture there is a miracle. A celestial nymph descends from heaven and carries her away; and it subsequently appears that she is carried away to the holy retreat of the sage Kasyapa, where she receives every attention from his wife Adití.

The "lost ring" recovered.

The sixth act opens in a street. The ring has been discovered inside a fish. The ring is carried to the Raja, and he at once remembers Sakúntalá. The fisherman is dismissed with rich rewards, whilst the Raja sinks into a state of deep sorrow over the memory of his lost love.

Mythical incidents.

The scene changes to the garden of the palace. The nymph again descends. She has been commissioned by the mother of Sakúntalá to see how it fares with Raja Dushyanta. The Raja, in his profound melancholy, has prohibited the celebration of the vernal festival. He draws the portrait of Sakúntalá from memory. At last he is honoured by Indra with being appointed to command the host of gods or Devatas in a war against the giants, and he is carried away by the charioteer of Indra.

The reconciliation.

The seventh act opens in the sky. The Raja has defeated the giants, and is proceeding through the air. The charioteer descends into the retreat of Kasyapa. The Raja sees a little boy playing with lions, and his heart yearns towards him. He discovers that the child is his own son. He meets Sakúntalá. All is explained, and the pair live happily for the rest of their days. The boy is named Bharata. He grows up and becomes a conqueror of the world. To this day the whole peninsula of India is known in popular tradition as the land of Bharata.

The "Stolen Marriage."

There is another drama, which is wanting in the poetry and sentiment which characterize Sakúntalá, but is more interesting from the romantic character of its incidents. It is called "Málatí and Mádhava," or the "Stolen Marriage." The idea of a stolen marriage in Brahmanical times would be regarded with a feeling of horror; and the idea of an elopement, even if it terminated in marriage, would cast a stain of infamy on the whole family. Marriage, according to Brahmanical ideas, is a sacrament. Every father is bound, by religious duty, to provide a husband for his daughter, and a wife for his son. Any failure in this respect is impious, and any attempt to render the parental arrangement nugatory is an act of disobedience and wickedness on the part of the child. But Buddhism regards marriage in a very different light. From the monastic point of view marriage is a mistake. It serves to perpetuate existence, and retain mankind within the vortex of successive transmigrations. But Dharma looks more kindly upon married life, and the domestic relations generally. It enjoins the duties of the affections between husband and wife, parents and children, and leaves the young people in a great measure to form their own attachments. The conflict between these two conceptions of marriage was no doubt carried on during the age when the breach between Brahmanism and Buddhism was widening into antagonism, but in modern times nearly every trace has died out, excepting in Brahmanical forms of Kshatriya traditions of the Swayamvara. It forms, however, a remarkable feature of this curious drama "of Málatí and Mádhava," which so far furnishes a picture of old Hindú life under Buddhist forms. In a word, this drama is a full expression of a revolt against the Brahmanical conception of marriage, and strangely enough it is carried to a successful issue through the persevering efforts of an old Buddhist nun.

School of the Buddhist nun.

The hero and heroine of the play are only a pair of youthful lovers of the ordinary type. The leading character and moving spirit is the old Buddhist nun. She is evidently the representative of a class which existed in ancient times, and has since become extinct in India. She lives in the neighbourhood of a city named Padmaváti,[13] where for many years she had kept a school after the Buddhist fashion. She herself is head mistress, and two other nuns are her disciples and under-teachers. The school, however, is not for girls, but for boys; and parents in remote cities send their sons thither to learn logic and other kindred sciences.

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[13] It is impossible to identify the city, and the identification, if possible, would lead to no result.

Story of the drama.

In former years two boys went to this school. They became such close friends that they vowed if one had a son and the other a daughter, the two families should be united by a marriage. When they had grown to manhood, one became the minister of the Raja, and the father of the heroine Málatí; the other became a minister in a foreign state, and the father of the hero Mádhava. The Buddhist nun is the confidential nurse to Málatí; and at the same time receives Mádhava into her school. Her task is simple enough. She is to kindle a mutual passion between the heroine and the hero, and thus bring about a marriage without any appearance of design. The heroine Málatí lives secluded in her father's house; but Mádhava is sent on various pretences to walk before her window; and she accordingly looks through her casement, and falls in love with him. Again Málatí is sent out with her maidens to gather flowers in the temple gardens of Káma;[14] and Mádhava is sent to the same gardens, and there sees Málatí, and falls in love with her. But a Hindú maiden must restrain her feelings; and thus the growing passion between the two is indicated rather than described.

A marriage difficulty.

Scarcely are the pair conscious of their mutual love when their hopes are blighted. A certain old

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[14] Káma is the deity of love; the Indian Eros. His bow is stringed with bees. See *infra*, chap. ix.

CHAPTER VI.

courtier is the favourite of the Raja. He falls in love with Málatí, and prevails on the Raja to support his suit. The Raja asks the minister to give his daughter in marriage to the courtier; and the minister dares not refuse. An intrigue is now begun after Hindú fashion. The minister is the most obedient servant of the Raja. To please the Raja he will sacrifice his blooming daughter to the old courtier. Meantime the Buddhist nun knows her cue. She is to promote the union of Málatí and Mádhava at all risks; but the minister is not to appear in the matter. Whatever may become of his daughter, the minister must preserve the favour of the Raja. Whilst filled with secret disgust, he is to feign delight at the marriage of his daughter to the old courtier. Whilst filled with secret joy, he is to feign displeasure at the marriage of Málatí and Mádhava. In a word, the play is a succession of artifices, such as are regarded by Hindús generally as the height of cleverness and ability.

Intrigues of the Buddhist nun.

In the first instance the Buddhist nun seeks to familiarize the unsophisticated heroine with the idea of revolting against the will of her father, and running away with her lover. But she proceeds very cautiously, and by innuendoes rather than by direct counsel. In her capacity of nurse she pays a visit to her young charge. She laments that Málatí is to be sacrificed to age and ugliness, but adds that she is bound to obey her father. She hints at the story of Sakúntalá, who bestowed herself upon the lover of her choice; but adds that such an example should not be followed. She, however, descants upon the noble birth and great merits of Mádhava. She then takes her leave, exulting in the idea that she has tutored Málatí to hate the bridegroom, to doubt her father's affection, to feel that an elopement is not without precedent, and that Mádhava is worthy of her love.

Despair of the lovers.

The Buddhist nun next brings the lovers together in the temple garden of Siva. Here the heroine and hero plight their troth. At this point Málatí is brought away to be married to the old courtier. The preparations are concluded with bewildering haste. The bride and her maidens proceed on their elephants to the temple of Srí, to pray that nothing may interrupt the holy rite.[15] Mádhava and Makaranda are already at the temple, and peeping at the bridal procession through a lattice. Drums are heard. The white umbrellas tremble over the heads of the bride and her companions like white lotuses. The chowries of white hair float about like swans. The elephants advance, their golden bells tinkling in the sunshine. Every howdah is filled with bevies of blooming damsels singing songs of rejoicing. The elephants kneel, and Málatí descends and enters the temple accompanied by her maidens.

The climax.

The story now reaches a climax. The old courtier is waiting at home to receive his bride. But the Buddhist nun dashes the cup of happiness from his lips. She directs Mádhava to escape with Málatí to a Buddhist convent, where they are duly wedded. Meantime she arrays Makaranda, the comrade of Mádhava, in the wedding garments of Málatí to personate the bride; and sends him in the marriage procession to the house of the old courtier.

The adventures of Makaranda in the character

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[15] A temple to Srí, or the goddess of good fortune, is built in the neighbourhood of every city. Srí is identified with Lakshmí. See *infra*, chap. ix.

A disappointed bridegroom.

of a bride form a laughable episode. It should be explained that Makaranda has long been in love with the sister of the courtier, and is beloved in return. The interview between the supposed bride and the expectant bridegroom is not represented on the stage, but is related to the audience. The old courtier was very devoted, but found the lady very coy. He became somewhat rude, but met with a startling rebuff. He left the apartment in a rage; and his sister then went in to reason with the bride. Instead of a sister-in-law, she found a lover; and ultimately fled with him, after the fashion set by Málatí and Mádhava. The two bridegrooms were subsequently introduced to the Raja, who was at once reconciled to the state of affairs, and congratulated the minister and disappointed favourite on their new kinsmen. Here the story is virtually brought to a close.

Humour of the play.

It is easy to imagine the amusement which would be produced in a Hindú zenana by the performance of such a drama as that of Málatí and Mádhava. The ardour and devotion of the young men, the runaway marriages, and the discomfiture of the old bridegroom, would all be in exact accordance with zenana tastes. But certain episodes are introduced into the original drama, which mar the plot by their sensational character, and which are only useful as illustrating that dark form of the worship of Durgá, which was practised in ancient times. This goddess was propitiated by human sacrifices, and on two occasions Málatí is said to have been carried off to her shrine, and would have been slaughtered before the idol had she not been rescued by Mádhava. The particulars will accordingly be reviewed hereafter in dealing with the worship of Durgá.[16]

Chronology of the Sanskrit drama.

It is difficult to arrive at any approximate idea of the age in which the Sanskrit dramas were composed. They are not mentioned by the Greeks, and they do not apparently contain any reference to the Mussulman invaders. They may therefore be referred to the first ten centuries of the Christian era. But social development amongst the Hindús is of slow growth; and even in the progress of centuries the outer life of the people undergoes but few important changes. The Sanskrit Theatre furnishes valuable illustrations of that resignation and habitual self-control, which specially mark the Hindú people; but it is wanting in that power of characterization to which the Shakspearian drama owes its force and brilliancy.

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[16] See *infra*, chap. ix.

CHAPTER VII.

THE RAJPOOTS.

CHAPTER VII.

The Rajpoots, the old military aristocracy of India.

The Rajpoots, or sons of Rajas, are the noblest and proudest race in India. With the exception of the Jews there are, perhaps, no living people of higher antiquity or purer descent. They claim to be representatives of the Kshatriyas; the descendants of those Aryan warriors who conquered the Punjab and Hindustan in times primeval. To this day they display many of the characteristics of the heroes of the Mahá Bhárata and Rámáyana. They form a military aristocracy of the feudal type. They are brave and chivalrous, keenly sensitive of an affront, and especially jealous of the honour of their women. Their chiefs, when occasion serves, are prepared to lead the life of outlaws, like the Pándava brothers, or to go into exile with the silent haughtiness of Ráma. Indeed, but for the paramount power of the British government, they would still carry on bloody feuds for generations, or engage in deadly wars which would end only in extermination.

Relics of the Vedic Aryan Kshatriyas.

The Rajpoots are the links between ancient and modern India. In days of old they strove with the kings of Magadha for the suzerainty of Hindustan from the Indus to the lower Gangetic valley. They maintained imperial thrones at Lahore and Delhi, at Kanouj and Ayodhyá. In later revolutions their seats of empire have been shifted further west and south, but the Rajpoot kingdoms still remain as the relics of the old Aryan aristocracy. At some remote period the Chohan dynasty of Ayodhyá was transferred to the remote west, to the ancient city of Chittore on the fertile uplands of Meywar. Later on, during the convulsions which followed the Mussulman invasions, the Rahtore dynasty of Kanouj was transferred still further to the west, to the sandy wastes of Marwar beyond the Aravulli hills. At the same time the dynasties of Lahore and Delhi faded away from history, and perchance have reappeared in more remote quarters of India. The Rajpoots still retain their dominion in the west, whilst their power and influence have been felt in every part of India; and to this day a large Rajpoot element characterizes the populations, not only of the Punjab and Hindustan, but of the Dekhan and Peninsula.

Kingdoms of Meywar, Marwar, and Jeypore.

The Rajpoot empire of a remote antiquity is represented in the present day by the three kingdoms of Meywar, Marwar, and Jeypore. Meywar, better known as Chittore or Udaipore, is the smallest but most important of the three. It forms the garden of Rajpootana to the eastward of the Aravulli range. Westward of the range is the dreary desert of Marwar. Northward of Meywar lies the territory of Jeypore, the intermediate kingdom between Meywar and the Mussulmans. Meywar is a remote region of fruitful hills; a land of wheat, rice, and barley. Towards the Mussulmans, her left flank was guarded by the Aravulli chain and sandy wastes of Marwar; her front was covered by the kingdom of Jeypore.[1]

High descent of the Ranas of Meywar—the ancient Chittore and modern Udaipore.

In former times the sovereigns of Meywar were known as the Ranas of Chittore; they are now known as the Ranas of Udaipore. They belong to the blue blood of Rajpoot aristocracy. They are Sesodian Chohans; the ornament of the thirty-six royal races of Rajpootana.[2] They are descended from the old Súrya-vansa of Ayodhyá; the Solar race, or children of the Sun. To this day the golden sun on a black disc of ostrich feathers forms the royal insignia of the sovereigns of Udaipore. Their purity of blood is renowned throughout all India. The Rahtores of Marwar, the Kutchwahas of Jeypore, and indeed all the Rajpoot chieftains in India, are alike prepared to do homage to the Sun-descended Rana. To the Hindús he is the living representative of the Solar race of Ráma and Ikswáku. To the Mussulman he is the descendant of Noushirvan and the ancient Persian kings.[3]

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[1] The three different Rajpoot kingdoms are sometimes called by different names:—(1) Meywar, as already stated, was anciently known as Chittore; but since Chittore was captured by the Emperor Akber, and a new capital was founded at Udaipore, the sovereign has been called the Rana of Udaipore. (2) Marwar is often called Jodhpore, after the capital of that name. (3) Jeypore is sometimes known as Amber. Besides these three principal kingdoms there are other Rajpoot states, which will be brought under notice as occasions arise in dealing with later Mussulman and Mahratta history. They include Bikaneer, Kishengurh, Jessulmere, Kotah, Boondi, Haraoti, Sirohi, &c. There was also an ancient Rajpoot empire in the western peninsula of Guzerat, known as Anhilwarra. See Tod's Rajast'han.

[2] The names of the thirty-six royal races are enumerated by Colonel Tod; but they may be said to have passed away from the history of India, and have become mere relics of an unknown antiquity. In the present day the two most important races are the Chohans and the Rhatores. The Chohans migrated from Ayodhyá to Meywar; the Rhatores from Kanouj to Marwar. The Chohans also established themselves in Guzerat. Jeypore is said to have been colonised by a Rajpoot tribe known as the Kutchwahas of Ayodhyá.

[3] The connection between the Ranas of Udaipore and the ancient Persian kings is a mere matter of legend, to be believed or not according to individual

Solar and Lunar dynasties.

The social condition of the Rajpoots is reflected in the Hindú epics and dramas; but of their substantive history prior to the Mussulman invasion nothing has been preserved beyond the graphic description of the king and the people, which has been presented by Hiouen-Thsang.[4] There is a strange mythical distinction between the Solar and a so-called Lunar race, which has long been a difficulty to genealogists. The legend of a Solar race at Ayodhyá and Kanouj is apparently an outgrowth of the worship of the Sun. The so-called Lunar race, or children of the Moon, possessed two kingdoms; one on either side of the Solar empire. Thus there was one Lunar kingdom at Patali-putra, and another at Delhi; but neither had any connection with the worship of the Moon; and the legend of the race is only associated with the Moon as an antithesis or antagonism to the Sun. The Rámáyana refers to the Solar dynasty of Ikswáku and Ráma. The Mahá Bhárata refers to the Lunar race of Puru, Bhárata, and the Pándavas. The Greeks say nothing of these rival races; they only distinguish between the Punjab empire of Porus, and the Gangetic empire of Sandrokottos. Even in Hindú tradition the distinction appears as a mere dream of the genealogists, without any authentic origin. But still from a remote antiquity there was a traditionary struggle between Delhi and Kanouj for the supremacy. When the Mussulmans were pouring through the gates of India,[5] Delhi and

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sentiment. Compare Tod's Rajast'han, vol. i., chaps. i.—iii. Also Annals of Meywar in the same volume, chaps. i.—iii.

[4] See *ante*, page 266.

[5] In a previous chapter (see page 8) the Aryan and Turanian gates of India have been placed somewhat artificially at the two different extremities of Hindustan.

Kanouj were still at feud.[6] The Chohan of Delhi had carried off a Rahtore princess from Kanouj, and in revenge, Kanouj had encouraged the Mussulmans to advance against Delhi. The result was that Delhi fell, but Kanouj shared her fate. The resistless tide of invasion carried away both cities and flowed down the valleys of the Ganges and Jumna. The Raja of Kanouj perished in the Ganges. His son took horse with a gallant band of followers, and established a new Rahtore empire in the desert of Marwar. Thus the old Solar and Lunar empires passed away from India.[7]

Abduction of the Kanouj princess by the Delhi king.

The abduction of the Rajpoot princess of Kanouj by the Chohan Raja of Delhi is celebrated in the lays of Kavi Chand Burdái, the most celebrated of the national bards of the Rajpoots.[8] The incidents

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But according to Mussulman tradition, Cabul and Candahar are reckoned as the two gates of Hindustan; Cabul as the gate to Turan and Candahar to Iran.

[6] It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that this struggle between Delhi and Kanouj was a relic of the old antagonism between the Rajpoots of Maharashtra, and Síláditya of Kanouj and Magadha.

[7] It is possible that the distinction between the Solar and Lunar races originated in the antagonism between the Bráhman priest and Buddhist monk; or possibly to some extent in the conflict between the Indo-Aryan and Indo-Chinese races. The empire of Kosala, and its capital at Ayodhyá, were certainly Brahmanical in character, and associated with the Sun as Vishnu. The Punjab, to say the least, was less Brahmanical. It was an ancient centre of the worship of Indra, who was always regarded as an enemy by the Bráhmans; and it was also a stronghold of Buddhism. Magadha again was under a Lunar dynasty, and a centre of Buddhism. Krishna was an offshoot of the Lunar race, and his modern worship is certainly a substitute for Buddhism. Indra is still a great favourite with the Buddhist population of Burma, who regard him as king of the gods. The peacock is the emblem of the Solar race; and the hare is the emblem of the Lunar race. The king of Burma claims to be descended from both the Sun and Moon; and consequently both the peacock and the hare apdear upon his throne at Mandalay. Compare also Tod's Rajast'han, vol. i., chaps. iv. to vii.

[8] A paraphrased translation of the Pirthiraja of the poet Chand has been undertaken by Mr Beames. A large portion has already appeared in the Indian Antiquary, a valuable collection of articles and translations, edited by Mr James Burgess. The popular character of this Journal, and the reputation

are surrounded with all the extravagant imagery and mythical allusions of oriental poetry, but are nevertheless a genuine expression of Rajpoot sentiment. The proud Rahtore of Kanouj performed a mystic ceremony, which was an assertion of suzerainty, like the ancient horse-sacrifice, but in which every part had to be performed by a feudatory chieftain or inferior Raja.[9] The Chohan was invited to attend, but disdained to listen to the arrogant summons. The Rahtore in derision set up a statue to represent the Chohan as a door-keeper. The ceremony was duly performed, and followed by a Swayamvara for the daughter of the Rahtore. But the daughter of Kanouj cared for none amongst the crowd of suitors. In her secret heart she pined for the love of the Chohan of Delhi. She passed through the gallant host of Rajpoot chieftains,

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of its contributors, recommend it to all who are interested in Indian archæology.

[9] This child-like and primitive ceremony is not only a veritable relic of antiquity, but is still practised amongst the Bhoonyas, in the tributary Mahals. This tribe claims to be of Rajpoot origin, and their chiefs exercise the right of installing the neighbouring Raja of Keonjhur in the old Rajpoot fashion described by the poet Chand. The ceremony was performed as late as February, 1868, and was described in an official report by Mr Ravenshaw, the Superintendent of Cuttack. All the officers about the person of the Raja were discharged by Bhoonya chiefs, who had hereditary duties to perform. Thus one chief acted the part of the royal steed, and entered the hall with the Raja on his back. Another acted the part of a throne, and formed with his back and arms the throne on which the Raja was placed. When the Raja dismounted, a third chief gave him a "soropa," or honorary head-dress, by winding a flexible jungle-creeper round the royal turban; whilst the principal chief gave the Raja a "tika," or mark of investiture upon the forehead. The Bhoonya chiefs then consider that they have made over the realm to the new Raja, and require from him a promise that he will rule justly, and deal mercifully with his people. These acts of the Bhoonyas are ratified and rendered sacred by the performance of a portion of the rites of consecration by the Bráhman family priests; and on the conclusion of the Brahmanical ceremonies, the Bhoonyas do homage and make offerings, and escort the Raja, mounted on his steed as before, to his apartments in the palace. Details of this ceremony are also furnished by Colonel Dalton in his "Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal," page 146.

and placed the marriage garland round the neck of the statue of the Chohan. At the sight of this a mighty uproar filled the hall. The Chohan appeared upon the scene, and carried off his bride. Swords were drawn, blood was shed, and the princess herself took part in the struggle. The lover prevailed against the father, and carried off his prize to Delhi.[10]

The tragic end.

From that hour the Chohan was enslaved by the beauty of the Rahtore. His army and his dominion were alike forgotten as he basked in the smiles of his bride. The Mussulman war-cry resounded through the Punjab, but the Chohan was a captive at the feet of his queen. The enemy thundered at the gates of Delhi, and then the bridegroom and the bride awoke from their dream of pleasure. The princess armed her lord for the battle. She conjured him to die for his name and fame, and vowed that she would follow him. The Chohan perished in the fight; and the Rahtore ordered the pile to be prepared, threw herself upon the flames, and joined her bridegroom in the mansions of the Sun.[11]

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[10] The Rajpoot sovereigns of Delhi were originally of the Tuar race, whilst the Chohans reigned at Ajmere. But in an earlier contest between Delhi and Kanouj, the sovereign of Ajmere had given powerful help to Delhi, and obtained the hand of a Tuar princess as a reward. A son was born of this union, named Pirthi Raj; who thus had a Chohan father and a Tuar mother. When Pirthi Raj was five years of age he succeeded to the throne of Delhi. Pirthi Raj was the hero who carried off the Kanouj princess, and perished in the struggle against the Mussulmans. The Kanouj princess was named Sanjogta.

The chronology of these events is somewhat obscure. It will suffice for the present to refer them to the eleventh and twelfth centuries of the Christian era. In dealing henceforth with Mussulman annals it may be possible to arrive at a more exact chronology.

[11] The legend of the Kanouj princess is not without a parallel in later Rajpoot story. The following incident, half romantic and half tragic, belongs to the early part of the fifteenth century. Sadoo, heir of the fief of Poogul in Jessulmere, was the bravest chieftain of his age. His name was a terror throughout the desert. On one occasion as he rode from a foray to his mountain home, a Rájpoot invited

Intense antagonism of Rajpoots against Mussulmans.

The early invasions of the Mussulmans must have inspired the Rajpoots with peculiar horror. The gallant aristocracy of India must have detested the barbarians from the north with all the hatred of Iran against Turan. The fanatical marauders overwhelmed the luxurious cities of Lahore, Delhi, and Kanouj, shouting for God and the Prophet, but caring for nothing save women and plunder. Their war-cry spread terror far and wide. The Rajpoot nobles and their retainers rode forth to take the field, or manned the walls and fortresses. The multitude flocked to the temples, whilst the Bráhmans performed their sacrifices and incantations, and implored the gods for succour. Women and children trembled at the roar of battle as it grew nearer and nearer like an inundation of the sea. Some were huddled together in the inner chambers. Others hid themselves in secluded gardens, or flocked to the roofs of palaces to gain tidings of the fight. It was a war of iron and rapine against gold and beauty. The brown and hardy hosts of central Asia scaled the walls, scimitar in hand, or burst open the gates, in overwhelming numbers. The fair-complexioned Rajpoots fought with chivalry and

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him to his dwelling, and gave him good cheer. The daughter of the house saw Sadoo, and though she was betrothed to another, she gave her heart to the warrior of Jessulmere. Sadoo became enamoured in his turn, and before he left the house, he managed to intimate his passion. The cocoa-nut was sent and accepted, and Sadoo returned to her father's house to claim his bride. But when the marriage was over, and he was escorting her to her new home, a mortal conflict awaited him. The lover to whom she had been betrothed had sworn that he would be revenged. He encountered Sadoo, and the two chieftains fought desperately at the head of their respective followers. The bride watched anxiously from her car, but the battle was soon over. Sadoo was slain, but she had taken her resolution and did not weep a tear. The pile was prepared on the field. She sat herself thereon and took her lord in her arms. The fire was lighted; and the flames that were to have carried her to the Sun, reduced the living and the dead to dust and ashes. Tod's Rajast'han, vol. i., pages 627, 629.

desperation, but they fought in vain. A rush of mailed warriors, a clashing of swords and spears, piles of dead and dying round the gateway, and the city was left at the mercy of soldiers who knew not how to pity or how to spare. In a few moments licentious ruffians were penetrating the recesses of zenanas, seizing shrinking wives and daughters, tearing off their necklaces and rings, their bracelets and girdles, or subjecting them to ruder insults from which humanity recoils. Nothing was sacred in their eyes. They ransacked every chamber and every shrine in their thirst for jewels and treasure. They filled the streets and houses with blood; they hacked and hewed at temples and idols; they broke down Buddhist saints and Brahmanical deities; they derided the relics of holy men; they profaned the altars of the gods; and they carried off young men and maidens, and even the priests and dancing girls of the temples, to sell as slaves in the bazaars of Cabul and Ghuzni.

Reflex of the struggle in existing ruins.

Old Delhi has long since passed away. It lies buried beneath the mounds and heaps, which still bear the name of Indra-prastha. But the struggle between Mussulman and Rajpoot is to this day reflected by the ruins. A Buddhist temple is still standing, but the images of saints and Buddhas have been cut down by the puritanical idol-breakers of Islam. The Hindú colonnade became a part of a Mussulman palace, but both are now in ruins. Moorish arches, gateways, courtyards, and tombs are all slowly sinking into decay, surrounded by the still more ancient relics of Rajpoot civilization. The landscape is as green and bright as ever; but the pilgrim who ascends the column of Mussulman victory, and gazes upon the scenes around, may yet recall the charges and war-cries of the Mussulman horsemen, and the sullen groans of the routed Hindús as they were trampled down by their own elephants in the effort to escape from the fatal field. All, however, is silent and solitary. The banners of Islam and the ensigns of Rajpoot chivalry have alike vanished in the past; and the dust of victors and vanquished lie buried beneath the mounds.[12]

Capture of Chittore by Allá-ud-deen.

The Mussulmans conquered the valleys of the Ganges and Jumna, but for generations they cared not to attack the Rajpoots in their southern homes. Throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the Ranas of Chittore maintained a firm front; but about the year 1303 the storm of invasion burst upon the ancient capital. Allá-ud-deen, the slave-king, was Sultan of Delhi. His Indian conquests are still famous in Mussulman annals; and he gathered up all his strength for the capture of Chittore. The city was doomed. The Rajpoots resisted until there was no alternative but to yield or die; and death was better than submission in the eyes of the Súrya-vansa. The Rajpoot women, to the number of thousands, performed the dreadful Johur. Huge piles of timber were constructed and set on fire. The hapless women moved to the spot in slow procession, and threw themselves upon the devouring flames rather than be profaned by the aliens. The Rana and his surviving Rajpoots

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[12] The column of Mussulman victory, known as the Kootub, is well known to every one who has visited Delhi. It is forty feet higher than the London monument, and is said to be the tallest pillar in the world. It is a lofty column of red sandstone, fifty feet in diameter at the base, but tapering away very gradually towards the top, where it is only thirteen feet. It is surrounded by five galleries, at suitable intervals from each other; and on its outer face are engraved many texts from the Koran.

CHAPTER VII.

arrayed themselves in saffron robes, and prepared for death. Sword in hand they might perchance force a way of escape, and plant a new home elsewhere; but otherwise they would perish on the threshold of their devoted city. The Sultan triumphed over the Rana. A few desperate Rajpoots cut their way through the lines of Islam, and found a refuge in the heart of the Aravulli hills, but the remainder perished without the walls. The flame and smoke of the Johur was still rising above the hecatomb of female victims, when Allá-ud-deen made his way through heaps of slain into the stronghold of Chittore.[13]

Rajpoot war of independence under Hamir.

The Sultan did not retain the Rajpoot capital. He garrisoned the country with Mussulmans, but he made over the city to a recreant Rajpoot chieftain of Jhalore, who was named Maldeo. But Maldeo had little reason to be proud of his new possession.

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[13] Tod's Rajast'han, vol. i., page 265. A legend has been preserved by Colonel Tod respecting a previous attack on Chittore by the same Sultan; but it betrays too many marks of poetical embellishment to entitle it to a place amongst traditions of a more authentic character. The Sultan is said to have been in love with the wife of the Rana. He took the Rana ptisoner, and then demanded the lady as a ransom. The Rana and his attendants were confined after Tartar fashion in a few tents in an enclosure surrounded by cloths. The lady was to pay him a farewell visit with her maidens, and then to enter the zenana of the Sultan. Seven hundred litters were prepared, but soldiers were placed inside in the place of the maidens; and the bearers of the litters were only soldiers in disguise. The litters were carried into the enclosure, and the soldiers rescued the Rana, and placed him on a fleet horse which reached Chittore in safety. The soldiers, however, are said to have been all slain in their efforts to cover the retreat of their royal master. Tod's Rajast'han, vol. i., Annals of Meywar, chap. vi.

Although the story is here treated as somewhat apocryphal, it is widely known in Rajpoot tradition, and may have some substratum of truth. Orientals are often influenced by the tender passion, but they are not prone to fall in love with the wives of others. On the other hand, according to the old Kshatriya laws of war, the wife is the prize of the conqueror; and the possession of the wife is an undeniable assertion of conquest. Indeed the idea of capture finds expression in Rajpoot sentiment, as it did in old Kshatriya tradition. The Rajpoot prides himself on his horse, his lance, and his mistress; but he wins his mistress by his horse and lance.

The band of exiles in the Aravulli hills was headed by a prince of the royal line named Hamir; and all the lawless and adventurous warriors of the time were eager to join his banners. The exploits of Hamir became famous far and wide. At times he descended from his fastnesses, and desolated the country with fire and sword; and then returned to his mountain home, perchance with the head of an enemy at his saddle-bow. Meantime Maldeo was paralyzed. He was shut up in his fortresses, whilst Hamir was devastating the plains.[14]

Hamir inveigled into a widow marriage.

At last Maldeo thought to inveigle Hamir into a matrimonial alliance. He had a daughter, but according to Rajpoot ideas she was a widow. The fact was not generally known, but she had been betrothed in her infancy, and lost her husband whilst still a child. Accordingly Maldeo sent the cocoa-nut of marriage to Hamir.[15] The young Rana was taken by surprise. His companions urged him to refuse the cocoa-nut. They knew not of the previous betrothal, but they suspected that Maldeo intended either an insult or a snare. Hamir, however, was not to be dissuaded. He was prepared to undertake any risk that would enable him to visit Chittore. He accepted the cocoa-nut, and proceeded to the ancient capital. The sons of Maldeo came out to meet him, but no marriage symbol was hanging on the city gate.[16] Maldeo and his kinsmen received the Rana with folded hands, and presented him to his bride; but there was no ceremony and no rejoicing. The garments of the pair were tied together, and Hamir was left alone with his bride. Then he knew that he had married a widow.[17]

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[14] Tod's Rajast'han, vol. i. page 269.

[15] See *ante*, page 25.

[16] This Rajpoot symbol is known as the Torun. It consists of three wooden bars formed into a triangle, having the apex crowned with the image of a peacock. The Torun was supposed to be placed over the portal of the bride's house, and the bridegroom was to break it with his lance, whilst her damsels defended it from the parapets by assailing him with missiles of various kinds. When the Torun is broken the damsels retire. Tod's Rajast'han, vol. i., p. 271.

Chittore recovered by Hamir.

The insult must have been a heavy blow to the proud Rajpoot. His bride was a widow only in name, and she had lost her husband before she could remember his face. But the fact remained that she had been betrothed to another. She succeeded in averting the wrath of the bridegroom by whispering a way by which he might recover Chittore; but Hamir bound himself and his successors by a solemn oath never again to wed a daughter of the house of Jhalore. He carried his bride to his mountain house, and received some lands as dowry, but he was only biding his time. A son was born. Maldeo was absent from the capital on a foreign expedition. The wife of Hamir proceeded to Chittore to place her infant son before the shrine of the god Siva, but in reality to win over the chieftains to the cause of the exiled Rana. Her end was gained. Hamir was admitted into the city, and Maldeo discovered that his possession had passed away.[18]

Revival of Chittore: peace, 1304—1534.

The capture of Chittore by Allá-ud-deen proved to be only a spasmodic effort. The invasions of the Turks and Afghans had spent their force, and the Mussulman empire in Hindustan was weakened by revolution and dismemberment. Under Hamir and his successors Chittore recovered all her former power and glory, and for two centuries the Sesodian Chohans maintained their independence in their native hills, whilst exercising suzerainty over the greater part of Rajpootana.[19] Marwar and Jeypore alike paid homage to the representative of the Súryavansa, and their example was followed by every chieftain on Rajpoot soil.

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[17] Tod, vol. i., p. 271.

[18] Ibid. The tradition of Hamir, his marriage, and his recovery of Chittore, is recorded at length by Colonel Tod. Rajast'han, vol. i., Meywar, chap. vi. The events may be referred to the early part of the fourteenth century. Chittore was captured 1304.

Marriage of Lakha Rana.

In these days of prosperity the Ranas of Chittore kept the Mussulmans at bay, and fought their foes and married their wives like their fathers of old. At this period an incident occurred, which illustrates more plainly than the marriage of Hamir, the extreme sensitiveness of the Rajpoots as regards the purity of their wives. If a woman had been captured by force of arms, after the conquest of all her kinsmen, it seems to have mattered little whether she had been previously married or betrothed. She had become the prize of valour, the trophy of victory. But if the mystic cocoa-nut was sent in her name, it was deemed essential that she should never have been betrothed to another man; and that even her name should never have been associated in thought or word with the possibility of her being intended for another. In 1373 Lakha Rana ascended the throne of Chittore. He had a son named Chonda. At that time the Rao of Marwar had a daughter, and he sent the cocoa-nut of marriage to Chonda, son of Lakha. The cocoa-nut was carried to the capital, but Chonda was absent from Chittore. The old Rana Lakha entertained the messenger, and jested with him, saying, "When my son returns he will take the cocoa-nut; the plaything, I suppose, was not intended for a greybeard like me." The jest reached the ears of Chonda and aroused his pride. His father had raised a doubt about the bride, and he would not take the cocoa-nut, which might have been intended for his father. The Rana was perplexed. To reject the cocoa-nut was to arouse the wrath of Marwar. His son was still obstinate. So the old Raja took the cocoa-nut and married the daughter of the house of Marwar. But Chonda lost not only the bride but the throne. He was required to swear that if the bride gave birth to a son he would renounce the kingdom. After a while a son was born, and named Mokul. Five years afterwards the Rana died, and Chonda was the first to pay homage to the infant Rana. Henceforth Chonda was as loyal as the hero Bhíshma, and ruled Chittore in the name of Mokul as faithfully as Bhíshma had ruled for his young half-brother in Hastinápur.[20]

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[19] Chittore was captured by Allá-ud-deen in 1304; by Bahadur Shah of Guzerat in 1534; and by Akber in 1567. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries Chittore was tolerably free from Mussulman aggression.

Jealousy of the queen-mother.

But the queen-mother grew jealous of Chonda. She charged him with scheming to obtain the throne. The haughty Rajpoot said not a word, but went into exile like another Ráma. Scarcely had he left Chittore, when the kinsfolk of the queen-mother came flocking in from Marwar. They rejoiced to leave the desert plains of Marwar for the fertile gardens of Meywar; to exchange maize-porridge for wheaten bread. The old Rao of Marwar came himself, and took up his abode with his daughter; but the royal household hated him. Sometimes the old Rao took the boy-prince upon his knee and sat upon the throne of Chittore, and dreamed that he was Rana; and if the boy ran off to play, still the old dotard sat under the "Sun" of Chittore and played the part of Rana. The nurse complained to the queen-mother, and the queen-mother entreated her father to respect the insignia of Chittore. But the Rao laughed and jeered, and swore that the prince should die. Then the queen-mother fell into deep despair, and sent messengers for the faithful Chonda.[21]

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[20] Tod's Rajast'han, vol. i, p. 276.

Murder of the Rao of Marwar.

The Rao of Marwar was indeed a low Rahtore. He was enamoured with a handmaid of his daughter, and the damsel was compelled to listen to his dishonourable suit, but her heart revolted at the shame. One day Chonda and his horsemen gallopped into Chittore, but the Rao heard them not, for he was drunk with love and opium. The handmaid heard the tramp, and knew that deliverance was at hand. She saw that he was helpless, and was bent upon revenge. She took his turban and bound him to his bed so that he could not stir. The troops of Chonda rushed in, and the Rao awoke from his heavy slumber. One arm was free, and with that he seized a brass lotah, and dashed down the foremost of his foes; but a bullet pierced his heart, and his life was at an end.[22]

Murder of Rana Mokul.

After this Rana Mokul grew to manhood, and reigned many years at Chittore. The memory of his reign has faded away, but the story of his death is still preserved. He went out with his retainers to help the Rao of Kotah against the Mussulmans. Amongst his followers were two of his own kinsmen; they were the sons of his grandfather, but their mother was the daughter of a carpenter. On the road the Rana asked these men for the name of a tree; and their hearts burned within them, for they thought that he was mocking them because of their mother. Like true Rajpoots they revenged the affront by blood. That same day they fell upon the Rana whilst he was saying his prayers, and slew him on the spot; and then fled to the jungle to lead the lives of outlaws.[23]

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[21] Tod's Rajast'han, vol. i., p. 279.

[22] Tod's Rajast'han, vol. i., p. 280. The Marwar turban consists of a long cord wound round. When uncoiled it is often ninety feet long.

Value of Rajpoot traditions.

These traditions are valuable as authentic illustrations of Rajpoot character. To this day the chieftains present the same pride, the same sensitiveness, and the same lawlessness and sensuality; but they are gentlemen at heart, and are capable of a loyal devotion until death when occasion demands. Another group of traditions may now be brought under review, which throw a still further light upon the thoughts and ways of the old aristocracy of India, and also serve to indicate the superstitions which still dominate over their minds.

Feud of the three sons of Raemul Rana.

About the end of the fifteenth century, a sovereign named Raemul was Rana of Chittore. He reigned from 1474 to 1509. He had three sons, Sanga, Pirthi Rai, and Jeimal. Sanga was the eldest, and consequently the heir to the throne, and there was no one to question his right. From time immemorial, however, the Rajpoots have believed in the prophecies of holy men and women;

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[23] Tod's Rajast'han, vol. i., p. 280.

and it has already been seen that the prediction of a seer sufficed to overthrow a Raja of Ujain, and to raise a cowherd to the throne.[21] At this period there was a holy woman, a priestess of Charun devi, a form of Durgá. She dwelt in a temple of the goddess, built on a lonely hill, which was known as the Tiger mountain. Her powers of prophecy were famous throughout all the country around. Not a Rajpoot doubted the truth of her predictions. One day the three brothers were discoursing together, when Sanga suddenly said, "The throne of Chittore will be mine; but if the priestess should foretell otherwise I would abandon my right." This rash assertion took the other princes by surprise, but nevertheless they all three proceeded to the Tiger mountain, to hear what the priestess had to say, and their uncle, named Soorajmul, went with them. Pirthi Rai and Jeimal entered first, and took their seats upon a pallet bed. Sanga followed and took his seat upon a tiger's skin, whilst Soorajmul sat by him and placed a knee upon the skin. Then the priestess said, "The tiger's skin is an omen of sovereignty: Sanga will reign over Chittore, and Soorajmul will have a portion of his inheritance." Scarcely had she spoken when Pirthi Rai drew his sword to slaughter Sanga. A bloody fray ensued, and the holy woman fled in consternation. Sanga lost an eye and was sorely wounded, but he escaped to a sanctuary. Jeimal then returned to the palace, but Sanga and Pirthi Rai became outlaws in the jungle, and the feud lasted many years.[25]

The sequel of the tradition is characteristic of

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[21] See Hindú drama of the Toy-cart, *ante*, p. 305.

[25] Tod's Rajast'han, vol. i., p. 292, *et seq.*

Punishment of a barbarous husband.

Rajpoots. The prophecy of the priestess could not be gainsaid. Jeimal the youngest dwelt in his father's palace at Chittore, and grew in the favour of the Rana; but he tried to seduce a damsel, and was slain by her father at her chamber-door. Then Pirthi Rai returned to his father's palace, but he perished after another fashion. His sister was married to the chief of Serohi; and she appealed to Pirthi Rai for protection. She complained that her husband got drunk with opium, and then compelled her to sleep on the floor. The Rajpoot blood of Pirthi Rai boiled at this insult. He gallopped off to Serohi, and compelled the barbarous husband to make atonement to his wife, and hold her slippers in his hand. The cowardly husband pretended submission, but was bent upon revenge. When Pirthi Rai left Serohi, he was presented with poisoned sweetmeats; and he died before he reached Chittore. Thus Sanga became the Rana of Chittore, as the priestess had foretold.[26]

Mogul invasion.

During the sixteenth century the Moguls invaded India; and Baber, Humáyun, and Akber reigned in succession on the thrones of Delhi and Agra. Whilst Humáyun was carrying on a war in Bengal, the Mussulman Sultan of Guzerat marched an army against Chittore. Sanga, the outlaw, had become Rana after the death of Pirthi Rai; but he too was dead. His widow and infant son remained at Chittore, but a prince named Bikramajeet occupied the throne of the Rana. Bikramajeet was but a degenerate Rajpoot. He cared not for his horse and spear; only for wrestling and prize-fighting. The Rajpoot chiefs disdained such pursuits. They thought it mean to fight on foot; and they were insolently treated by the Rana. Bikramajeet marched out to battle aginst the Sultan, but was utterly defeated. Chittore was again invested by the Mussulmans, and there was another Johur. Amongst those women who perished was the widow of Rana Sanga; but before she joined the sacrifice she despatched her little son, named Oody Sing, to a place of safety, and sent her bracelet to the emperor Humáyun.[27]

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[26] Tod's Rajast'han, vol. i., page 675.

The tradition of the barbarous husband is a grim illustration of Rajpoot humour. Another has been preserved of a disobedient wife, which is less tragical. A daughter of Chittore had been given in marriage to a feudatory of the Rana; and she proved vain and disdainful, and looked down upon her husband's lineage. One day her husband asked her for a cup of water, but she refused, saying, "The daughter of a hundred kings is not a cup-bearer to her father's feudatory." The chieftain replied in anger, "If you cannot serve your husband, you had better return to your father." At these words the princess was furious with rage. She sent a messenger to carry the words to her father, whilst she herself followed close at his heels. The Rana summoned his feudatory, and heard the explanation. He then held a court, and placed the chieftain on his right hand; and when the court was over the crown prince stood before the chieftain and held his slippers. The chieftain was aghast, and cried out, "I am unworthy!" "Not so," said the Rana; "no honour is too great for my son-in-law. Take home your wife now, and she will never again refuse you a cup of water."—Tod's Rajast'han, vol. i., page 612.

Custom of the bracelet.

The gift of the bracelet is a relic of the days of Rajpoot chivalry. Whenever a Rajpoot lady is in peril, be she wife or maiden, she may select a protector by sending him her bracelet. She thus adopts him as her brother. He can never see her, but nevertheless he is flattered by the mystery and the honour. In return he sends a corsage as a pledge that he will guard his sister with his life. Humáyun was a Mogul and a gallant prince. He accepted the bracelet and obeyed the summons. He expelled the Guzerat Sultan from Chittore, and restored Bikramajeet to his throne.[28]

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[27] Tod's Rajast'han, vol. i., page 309.

[28] Ibid., page 312.

CHAPTER VII.

Murder of Bikramajeet.

But the Rana had learnt no lessons from his disasters. He treated his chieftains as insolently as ever, and they began to look abroad for a leader. At last they selected Bunbeer to rule Chittore until Oody Sing should be grown. Bikramajeet was murdered in his zenana. The women filled the palace with their screams; but their wailing was drowned in the shouts which hailed the accession of Bunbeer.[29]

Usurpation of Bunbeer.

But Bunbeer was illegitimate. His father was Pirthi Rai, but his mother was a handmaid. He was the uncle of Oody Sing, but he betrayed his trust. The boy's nurse became alarmed for the safety of her charge. She sent Oody Sing out of the palace, and placed her own child in the royal cradle. Bunbeer entered the chamber and asked for the prince. In an agony of terror she pointed to the cradle. In another moment Bunbeer had plunged his dagger into the heart of the boy. The unfortunate woman was stricken with horror. The remains of her child were burned in Rajpoot fashion amidst the tears of all the women of the zenana; and she then left the palace and sought out Oody Sing, and placed him in charge of the chieftain of Jhalore.[30]

Accession of Oody Sing.

Henceforth Bunbeer was hated as a murderer and usurper. The servile condition of his mother lowered him in the eyes of the Rajpoot aristocracy. At length it was whispered that Oody Sing was still alive, and had married a daughter of the chieftain of Jhalore. The vow of Hamir was still remembered, that none of his successors should wed a daughter of Jhalore. But the original affront was supposed to be condoned by the protection furnished to Oody Sing; and the young prince was accepted as the Rana by every chieftain in Rajpootana. The nobles rallied round his banner, and conducted him in triumph to Chittore; whilst Bunbeer escaped to the Dekhan, and became the ancestors of the Bhonslas of Nagpore.[31]

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[29] Tod's Rajast'han, vol. i., page 314.

[30] Tod's Rajast'han, vol. i., page 315. The narrative in the text is in accordance with Rajpoot customs, and perhaps it would be considered profane in Rajpootana to doubt its credibility. It is, however, easier to believe that the nurse palmed off her own son as the infant Rana, than to believe that she sacrificed her own son to save the life of a foster-child. The hypothesis is strengthened by the fact that the young Rana ultimately proved to be a coward; and in this manner the baseness of his origin may be supposed to have found expression.

Policy of Akber towards the Rajpoots.

Akber had now succeeded his father Humáyun on the throne of the Moguls, and was bent on the reduction of Rajpootana. His policy was simple enough. He demanded that the three great princes of Rajpootana should pay him homage, and should each give him a daughter in marriage.[32] Jeypore submitted, but Marwar and Chittore still held out. Akber then resolved to strike at the heart of Rajpootana by the capture of Chittore.

Akber captures Chittore.

The first attack failed. A favourite concubine of the Rana headed a sally of the Rajpoots, and routed the army of the Moguls. The infatuated Rana declared that the concubine had saved Chittore; and so exasperated his chieftains that they conspired together and slew the heroine.[33] But although Akber was repulsed, Chittore was doomed. A few years passed away. The country was distracted by feuds and wars, and in 1567 Akber advanced against the devoted city. Oody Sing, coward as he was, effected his escape from the capital; but the Rajpoots defended it with all the valour of their fathers. Patta and Jeimal were the heroes of the defence; and to this day their names are household words in Rajpootana. Patta was only sixteen. His father had already fallen, when his mother armed herself, and her son, and his youthful bride, to sacrifice their lives for Chittore. All three were slain, and then Jeimal took the lead. Other wives and daughters had now armed themselves for the battle, and the Rajpoots fought with the valour of despair. But the odds were overwhelming. All hope of deliverance was lost. Nothing remained but the holocaust of the Johur. The women threw themselves by thousands on the burning piles. The men put on their saffron garments, and rushed out sword in hand. The Moguls fell in heaps; but the mortal struggle was soon over, and the enemy poured into the bleeding capital. From that day Chittore lost all her ancient glory. She became the widowed city of Rajpootana. Oody Sing sought a refuge in the Aravulli hills, where he founded the city of Udaipore. He died shortly afterwards, but henceforth his successors were known as the Ranas of Udaipore.[34]

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[31] Tod's Rajast'han, vol. i., page 319.

[32] There is reason to believe that Akber was an unscrupulous admirer of the fair sex. He was accustomed to hold a kind of fancy fair within the palace, where the wives and daughters of princes and nobles were induced to serve as shopkeepers, and were often compelled to listen to his advances. The wife of one Rajpoot prince is said to have been dishonoured by the emperor. An Udaipore princess is reported to have been inveigled into his presence, but she held a poniard to his heart, and compelled him to retire. These Rajpoot scandals, however, refer more immediately to the personal character of Akber. Tod's Rajast'han, vol. i., page 345.

Pertab Sing succeeded Oody Sing as Rana. He

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[33] Tod's Rajast'han, vol. i., page 325.

[34] Ibid., page 329.

Pertab Sing, the hero of Rajpoot independence.

is the hero of the house of Udaipore. He utterly refused to make the smallest submission, or even the smallest concession to the Mogul conqueror. Jeypore had already transferred her allegiance to the Mogul; Marwar was wavering between the Rana and the emperor; but Pertab Sing was inflexible to the last. At one time he was carrying death and desolation into the plains of Meywar. At another he was flying from rock to rock on the Aravulli range, feeding his family with the wild fruits of his native hills. He ordered every true subject to join him in the mountains on pain of death; and so rigidly was this decree obeyed, that not a lamp was burning in all the land of Meywar. The garden of Rajpootana was becoming a desert. All the commerce of western Hindustan from Surat to Agra was brought to a close; for every caravan that attempted to pass was plundered by the guerillas of Pertab Sing. For a quarter of a century the Rana carried on this intermittent war. The privations and sufferings of himself and his family were often intense. Sometimes the children were crying for food; sometimes the elders were in peril of being captured by the Moguls. But he never forgot Chittore. So long as Chittore was a widowed city, he bound himself and his successors never to twist their beards, or eat from gold and silver, or sleep upon anything but straw. To this day the memory of the interdict is preserved in the royal house of Udaipore. The Rana never twists his beard. He eats from gold and silver, but there are leaves beneath the dishes. He sleeps upon a bed, but there is a scattering of straw below.[35]

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[35] Tod's Rajast'han, vol. i., page 331.

CHAPTER VII.

Jeypore and Marwar discarded by the Rana.

Meantime Marwar was compelled to yield. A daughter of the royal house of the Rahtores was sent to adorn the zenana of the emperor Akber. The sacrifice was a cruel one. Henceforth the Rajpoot princess was dead to her family and kinsfolk. But there was no alternative. The ruler of Marwar, however, was well rewarded for his concession. Henceforth he was placed on the right hand of the emperor. His title of Rao was raised to that of Raja. Large additions were made to his ancestral possessions. Nearly all the chieftains of Rajpootana were thus induced to follow his example, and become satraps of the Mogul. But Pertab Sing was unshaken in his resolution. No daughter of his house should be given to the Mogul emperor. No daughter of his house should wed with a family who had stooped to an alliance with the alien. He gave the Sesodian princesses to be wives of his own faithful feudatories, or of the impoverished descendants of ancient dynasties of Delhi and Kanouj; but he refused to give them to the degenerate rulers of Marwar or Jeypore. More than a century passed away before the Ranas of Udaipore could be induced to relax this vigorous law. The ban had been felt bitterly. A marriage with a princess of the Súrya-vansa purified the blood of every royal house in Rajpootana; it regenerated all the members of the family, and converted them into pure Rajpoots. Prayers and entreaties were offered to successive Ranas, but all in vain. Every proposal was rejected with scorn. When, in a future generation, the Rana at last gave way, two stipulations were rigidly enforced. The family so honoured abjured for ever all such alliances with the

Moguls, and bound itself to confer the succession to the throne on a son of the daughter of Udaipore.[36]

Restoration of Chittore to the Rana.

Pertab Sing died without regaining Chittore. His son Umra Sing continued to hold out bravely; but a degenerate member of the house deserted to the Moguls. This was Sugra, the brother of Pertab Sing. As a reward he was invested by the emperor with the dignity of Rana at the ancient capital of Chittore. But every temple and every ruin seemed to charge him with his crime. He was smitten with remorse; and then to gain relief he gave the city to Umra Sing. He perished like a Rajpoot. He went to the Mogul court, and was upbraided by the emperor. In his wrath he drew his dagger, and stabbed himself to death before the throne.[37]

The shadow of submission.

Umra Sing was at length induced to offer the shadow of a submission to the Mogul. But it was little better than a name. No daughter of Udaipore was sacrificed to the emperor. No firman from the emperor was admitted within the Rajpoot capital.[38] Henceforth, however, the history of the Rajpoots merges into that of the Moguls and Mahrattas, until the British government appeared upon the scene and effected the pacification of India by the assumption of the paramount power.

Political system of the Rajpoots.

The political system of the Rajpoots is a subject worthy of special study. The likeness between the Rajpoots and the Teutons was striking enough to induce Colonel Tod, the historian of Rajpootana, to work out a comparison in detail; but the data at his disposal were imperfect. He wrote in a past generation, when the study of comparative politics was a thing unheard of. Moreover in dealing with Rajpoot institutions he was unable to indicate the various stages in the development of forms of government, and merely dealt with them as a heap of organic remains.

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[36] Tod's Rajast'han, vol. i., page 335. [37] Ibid. [38] Ibid., page 350.

Rajpoots and Teutons.

The following conclusions, however, may be inferred from the facts brought to light by Colonel Tod. The Rajpoots were a race of warriors who formed the ruling class wherever they settled. Proud of a common and noble descent, they honoured the women of their nation; and, like the conquerors of Britain, kept themselves carefully apart from the people whose lands they had taken. As the Germans were in the time of Tacitus, the Rajpoots are to this day,—a distinct and unmixed people, like none but themselves, and easily distinguished by their physical characteristics from other natives of India. But the race deteriorated in consequence of its purity. The Rajpoots were not invigorated by the infusion of other blood as the English were; but spent their own vigour without renewing it from other sources.

Rajpoot states and early English kingdoms.

In Rajpootana the Rajpoots founded a number of states; and the history of these was perhaps analogous to that of the early English kingdoms. One of the princes generally had some kind of preeminence, real or nominal, over the rest. The position of the Ranas of Meywar was something like that held by the kings of Northumberland and Mercia; but they do not seem to have ever kept up a permanent supremacy like the kings of the West Saxons. The princes of the other states may at times have become the Rana's men; and then the Rana was over-lord of all Rajasthan. But he was never strong enough to set up a lasting power. The other states seized upon every chance of asserting their own independence; and the hegemony which individual princes were able to establish seldom outlived more than a few generations.

Rajpoot constitutions.

Every state had its own prince, its own feudatory chieftains, and its own separate constitution. The demesne of the prince occupied the centre of his dominion; whilst the fiefs of his several chieftains were distributed around. The royal demesne had a tendency to diminish with the grant of new fiefs; but at times it had a tendency to expand with new acquisitions arising from lapses or forfeitures. Originally the princes and their respective chieftains formed a military aristocracy. Each prince had probably in ancient times his own special band of companions, sworn to live or die in his defence. It seems probable that in Rajpootana, as in Europe, the close personal tie between the prince and his followers was superseded by a feudal relation between lord and vassal. Traces of the original institution were to be found at a comparatively recent period amongst the Rajpoot principalities of the Peninsula.[39] Each prince had also his own council of chieftains, in which all questions were discussed, whether of local or imperial interest. The Ranas of Meywar were nominally the sovereign lords of all. On grand occasions, when the general peace or welfare were concerned, the Rana convened a great assembly of all the princes and chieftains of Rajast'han. Accordingly, as every subject had been previously discussed in the local councils, every prince and chieftain of the separate states attended the Rana's assembly, fully prepared to take his part in the imperial council.

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[39] See especially Marco Polo's account of the five kings of the Tamil country, which will be brought under review in chap. viii.

Civil administration.

It would, however, appear that, in the progress of political development, the Rana of Meywar seems to have called in the aid of a civil power to neutralize the encroachments of military feudatories. Tod alludes to the "good times" of Meywar, in which the Rana was aided by a council of four ministers of the crown and their deputies; and promulgated all the legislative enactments in which the general rights and wants of the community were involved. In this civil administration neither the feudatory princes, nor their respective chieftains, had any share or concern.[40] Tod is unable to furnish any explicit information upon the development of this system of civil government. The wars between the Mahrattas and Rajpoots, which prevailed during the greater part of the eighteenth century and the earlier part of the nineteenth, had reduced the old Rajpoot constitutions to a state of comparative chaos.

Civil administration of Ava or upper Burma.

Fortunately the existing constitution of the kingdom of Ava, or upper Burma, will be found to throw considerable light upon the subject.[41] The sovereigns of Burma claim with some show of reason to be of Rajpoot descent. Their usages and ideas are in general accordance with those of the ancient Kshatriyas. But the power of the old military feudatories has been crushed out by the growth of an official and non-hereditary nobility. The consequence has been, that the Burmese constitution has neither an aristocratic element nor a popular one. It consists of mere civil and military officials, whose title and position entirely depend upon the will of the sovereign. It is thus a bureaucracy of the worst form, for it is altogether wanting in that hereditary influence and national spirit, which are necessary to impart stability and consistency to the imperial rule.

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[40] Tod's Rajast'han, vol. i. Feudal System in Rajast'han, chap. ii.

[41] The statements as regards the existing constitution of the kingdom of Ava are chiefly based upon certain notes which were taken by the author during a semi-political mission to Mandalay and Bhamo in the year 1870. They are, however, in general accordance with the information supplied by F. Sangermano, "Description of the Burmese Empire." Rome, 1833.

Two great councils.

The central authority at Mandalay, the present capital of Burma, directs and controls the entire administration of the kingdom. It consists of two great councils, namely,—

1st. The supreme council and high court of appeal, known as the Hlot-dau.

2nd. The privy or palace council, known as the Byadeit.

The Hlot-dau, or supreme council.

The Hlot-dau, or supreme council of Ava, corresponds to the royal council of four ministers of the crown, and their deputies, which is mentioned by Colonel Tod. It may therefore be accepted as a modern development of the royal council which existed under the old Ranas of Meywar. It exercises all the powers of a senate, a high court, and a cabinet. Its functions are legislative, judicial, and executive. As a senate, it possesses a constitutional power of *veto* to any act or order of the king. As a high court of civil and criminal justice, it tries all important cases, and is the highest court of appeal. As a cabinet, it exercises all the powers of government; and every order of the king is issued by the Hlot-dau in the name of the ministers of whom the court is composed. The court consists of the four Woongyees, or great ministers, and the four Woondouks, or assistant ministers. The crown prince is ex-officio president of the council; but a still higher throne is set apart for the king, on which his majesty occasionally takes his seat.

The Byadeit, or privy council.

The Byadeit, or palace council, is still more closely associated with the king, and it is doubtful whether it ever existed in Meywar. It consists of four ministers of the interior, who are the private advisers of the king, and take charge of the treasury, and all receipts and disbursements.

Substitution of officialism for feudalism.

The Hlot-dau, or supreme council, and the Byadeit, or privy council, thus form the two governing departments of the administration of Ava. Like the courts of the Normans and Plantagenets, both departments invariably accompany the king whenever he makes a progress within his own dominions. But in upper Burma, the old feudal element, which still prevails in Rajpootana, has entirely passed away. The two councils are composed of subservient smooth-tongued officials, whose ideas and aspirations are all centred in the king. They are the shadow without the substance of a constitution. They, however, serve to give a seeming permanence to the government of the kingdom, and perhaps hold it together, in the same way that officialism and routine held together the Byzantine empire for generations after its life-blood had ebbed away.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BRAHMANICAL REVIVAL, A.D. 600—1600.

CHAP. VIII.

India from the seventh to the seventeenth centuries.

The seventeenth century ushers in the history of modern India. In the Punjab and Hindustan the Mussulmans had founded the Mogul empire, and established its ascendancy from the mountains of Bactria and Cashmere to the delta of the Ganges. In the Dekhan the lesser Mussulman sovereignties had overthrown the last of the old Hindú empires, and were engaged in wars amongst themselves, or in extending their arms into the southern Peninsula. Meantime a new power appeared in the Eastern seas, which was destined to hold an imperial sway over the whole Indian continent. In 1600 the East-India Company obtained its first charter from Queen Elizabeth. In 1605 the emperor Akber died at Agra, and was succeeded by his son Jehángír, the grandfather of Aurangzíb. In 1613 the English built their first factory at Surat, and concluded their first treaty with emperor Jehángír. In 1639 they founded Madras; in 1661 they obtained Bombay; and in 1678 they settled at Calcutta. These factories grew into cities, and became the centres of trade; they are now the capitals of the Anglo-Indian empire.

Stagnation in Hindú development.

The early English adventurers appeared in India exactly ten centuries after the pilgrimage of Hiouen-Thsang. In England it is comparatively easy to realize the vast interval which elapsed between the seventh century and the seventeenth. The wars of the early English, their townships and gemots, had been succeeded by the manufacturing cities, the parliaments, and the political and religious activity of the Elizabethan era. But in India the interval is scarcely appreciable; in all essentials the people were the same in the seventeenth century as in the seventh. Buddhism had been overthrown, but the religion of the Jains remained. Islam again had planted mosques and schools throughout Hindustan and the Dekhan; but it could not modify the general idolatry.[1] The social and religious life of the great bulk of the Hindú population underwent no perceptible changes. In the days of Alexander and Megasthenes, the masses worshipped the sun and the rivers, sacrificed to Vishnu and Siva, paid reverence to naked Yogis, and burnt living widows with their dead husbands. Ten centuries later Hiouen-Thsang beheld similar scenes; and ten centuries later still the early English adventurers were gazing upon the same mysterious world.

Expulsion of Buddhism.

The most important event in the history of the interval is the expulsion of the Buddhist monks from India. Of the revolution which subverted

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[1] The annals of Mussulman India are chiefly valuable for the illustrations they furnish of the political and religious life of the Mussulmans themselves. They throw little or no light upon the civilization of Hindustan; and but little on that of the Dekhan and Peninsula. They may be said to commence in A.D. 665, twenty years after the departure of Hiouen-Thsang, when the Arabs conquered Scinde. But it was not until 1001 that Mahmúd of Cabul invaded Hindustan; and it was not until 1205, or two centuries after Mahmúd, that Kootub-ud-dín, the first Mussulman sovereign of India, was crowned king at Lahore.

Buddhism very little is known. No tradition of any value has been preserved. But still it is not difficult to arrive at the fact. In the seventh century, when Hiouen-Thsang visited Benares, the city was already more Brahmanical than Buddhist. It was the centre of the worship of Iswara or Siva, and swarmed with naked fanatics, who rubbed themselves with ashes, and practised religious austerities. Magnificent temples were built of stones richly carved, and wood choicely painted; whilst a brass colossal statue of the god, nearly a hundred feet high, filled the Chinese pilgrim with respectful awe. The centre of Buddhism was at Sárnáth in the immediate neighbourhood. This was the old deer-forest in which Gótama Buddha had first turned the wheel of the law. On this holy spot a vihára had been erected in the life-time of the apostle; and when Hiouen-Thsang visited the locality, stupas and viháras were to be seen in all directions. Here also had been founded one of those magnificent colleges or Sanghárámas, which were so famous in Buddhist India. But the Sangháráma at Sárnáth was not a flourishing institution in the seventh century. It only contained fifteen hundred Srámans, and they were all followers of the little Vehicle. In the present day Sárnáth is in ruins. Two great towers are still standing, and traces of the old college are still to be found; whilst relics and images of great variety have been discovered within the mounds. The ashes and charred remains sufficiently indicate that the whole was destroyed in some sudden conflagration; and as Buddhist pagodas have been converted into Brahmanical temples, suspicion points to a sudden outbreak instigated by the Bráhmans. Possibly some bitter disputation had been brought to a violent close; and a nest of infuriated fanatics had poured out of Benares to destroy the heretics and atheists of Sárnáth as enemies of the gods. Possibly, also, the popular veneration and respect for the holy men had been blunted by charges, such as those which a woman brought against Gótama, and which were freely levelled against the English clergy prior to the destruction of the monasteries. At present, however, the story lies beneath the mounds; Sárnáth was sacked and burned at the instigation of the Bráhmans.[2]

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[2] A legend of Divodás, a king of Benares, has been related in several Puránas, which may possibly refer to this revolution. Siva is said to have been desirous of occupying Benares, and sent Nikumbha to persuade the prince to embrace Buddhism. Accordingly Divodás became a follower of Buddha, and was expelled from Benares, and founded another city on the banks of the Gomatí.—Vishnu Purána, Wilson's translation, edited by Hall, vol. iv., pp. 33, 40.

General Cunningham, who conducted many excavations around Sárnáth in 1835-36, writes as follows:—"From the fifth to the seventh century the decline of Buddhism was gradual and gentle. But from the eighth century the fall was rapid and violent. New dynasties arose who knew not Sákya Muni; and the Tuars of Delhi, the Rahtors of Kanouj, and the Chándels of Mahoba, succeeded to the vast empire of Siláditya. The rise of all these families has been traced to the eighth century; and both coins and inscriptions remain to attest their Brahmanical belief. But Buddhism continued to linger in Benares, Malwa, and Guzerat; and was not finally extinguished until the eleventh or the twelfth century, when the last votaries of Buddha were expelled from the continent of India. Numbers of images, concealed by the departing monks, are found buried near Sárnáth; and heaps of ashes still lie scattered amidst the ruins to show that the monasteries were destroyed by fire."

Major Kittoe, who in 1851 carried on more extensive excavations in the same neighbourhood, confirmed the conclusions of General Cunningham. He wrote:—"All has been sacked and burned; priests, temples, idols, all together; for in some places bones, iron, wood, and stone are found in huge masses; and this has happened more than once."—Cunningham's Bhilsa Topes, chapter xii. See also Archæological Reports.

Probably it was at this time, or at some earlier period, that Kanouj abandoned Buddhism and embraced the religion of the Bráhmans. The fact is dimly indicated in the legend of Viswámitra, the son of the king of Gadhi or Kanouj, who is said to have been originally a Kshatriya, and subsequently to have become a Bráhman. See History, vol. ii., Rámáyana, chap. iv. Kanouj was subsequently the centre of orthodox Brahmanism, and supplied Brahmanical teachers to Bengal, whose descendants are still known as Kulin Bráhmans.

Jains of western India.

The appearance of the Jains is another revolution of which no record has been preserved. The religion of the Jains had for its object the liberation of the soul from the trammels of existence. It did not, however, accept the doctrine of annihilation or Nirvána, but assigned a spiritual life to the liberated soul in some undefinable mansion of the blessed. It taught certain precepts of strict morality which would seem to identify it with that school of Buddhism which was known as the little Vehicle.[3] The Jains worshipped saints who had effected their deliverance from the universe, rather than deities who ruled the universe, and the names of their twenty-four saints or Tirthankaras, commencing with Adináth and ending with Parisnáth and Mahávíra, are held in the profoundest veneration. The Jains were divided like the Buddhists into monks and laymen. Originally some of the sects abandoned all clothing, like the gymno-sophists of old; but the Jain monks in general are not only clothed, but distinguished as the "white-robed." Their shrines are stately and mysterious buildings of marble, generally standing in remote and secluded situations. Many are to be found in Rajpootana, especially on Mount Abú; but perhaps the most celebrated are those which have been built on the holy mountain of Satruniya in the Guzerat peninsula, over against the city of Palitana.[4] The Bráhmans expelled the Buddhists, but they could not wholly expel the Jains; and to this day the Jains form an interesting element in the Hindú population, especially in western India.

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[3] The eight deadly sins of the Jains are somewhat puerile; they were as follows.—(1) Eating at night. (2) Slaying an animal. (3) Eating the fruit of trees that give milk. (4) Tasting honey or flesh. (5) Taking the wealth of others. (6) Committing adultery. (7) Eating flowers, butter, or cheese. (8) Worshipping the gods of other religions.—Asiatic Journal, vol. xvii., 1824; vol. xvi., 1834.

It is difficult to say how far the Jains were connected with the little Vehicle. It has already been seen that Síláditya, king of Kanouj and Magadha, was a follower of the great Vehicle, and held a famous public disputation between the two Vehicles. A legend has been preserved in the Mahátma, or sacred chronicle of the mountain Satruniya, that the Buddhists held a public disputation with the Jains and gained the victory, whereupon Síláditya became a Buddhist; but that subsequently the Jains defeated the Buddhists, whereupon Síláditya became a Jain. See Forbes's Ras Mala, vol. i.

Triumph of Siva at Benares: phallic form of Iswara.

The overthrow of Buddhism at Sárnáth must have sent a thrill through the religious world of India. From time immemorial Benares had been the great centre of religious thought; the resort of all new teachers who aspired to be the founders of sects; the final court of appeal from all conflicting schools, such as those of Mithilá, Gour, and Dravira. The destruction at Sárnáth was the triumph of the worshippers of Siva. This deity, the Dionysos of the Greeks, was perhaps the most ancient and most mystic in the Brahmanical pantheon. Iswara or Siva was the first cause, the germ of all things. The linga was the symbol of Siva, and the representative of the supreme being. There was a corresponding symbol of the female sex. These two symbols were the material forms of that creative force, or supreme spirit, which was involved in the conception of Brahma. In the work of creation Iswara, or the germ, expanded into an egg, and evolved within itself the five elements,—earth, water, air, fire, and ether. The egg then separated into two parts, a higher and a lower. The higher portion became the heaven above; the lower portion became the earth beneath. It subsequently formed the universe of all created being; of gods, men, and animals; of mountains, plains, rivers, and seas. When it reached its full expansion it began slowly to diminish. The number of deaths exceeded the number of births. In this way it was gradually reduced to a single germ, which might be symbolized as a dew drop, but might be more exactly described as the centre point of the circle.[5] Thus universe after universe was created and passed away, after a similar fashion to that already indicated in the myth of a day and night of Brahma.

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[4] The holy mountain of Satruniya in the south-east of Kattiawar is sacred to Adináth, the first of the twenty-four Tirthankaras, who is said to have emigrated from Ayodhyá at some remote period. On the summit of the mountain is a colossal image of Adináth, hewn out of the solid rock. The mountain itself rises nearly two thousand feet above the plains. Upon these lonely heights the marble shrines of the Jains, with their stately enclosures, half-palace, half-fortress, have been constructed in the upper air, far removed from the ordinary tread of mortals, like the mansions of another world. In the dark recesses of each temple there is one or more images of Adináth, or some other Tirthankara. The alabaster features, wearing an expression of listless repose, are rendered dimly visible by the faint light which is shed by silver lamps. The air is perfumed with incense, and the female votaries, glittering in scarlet and gold, move round in circles barefooted over the polished floors, chaunting their monotonous but not unmelodious hymns. The mountain is one of the first places of Jain pilgrimage; the bridal hall of those who would marry everlasting rest. Many legends are told of fabled kings, who by their austerities and religious services on this sacred ground have thrown off the intolerable load of sin, and attained the blessing of liberation.—Forbes's Ras Mala, vol. i., chap. iii.

Conception of Siva and Durgá.

Ultimately these symbols were personified into a god and goddess; or rather a god and goddess were associated with the symbols. The worship of the male deity exhibited every stage of development. Sometimes it found expression in a pure and elevated adoration of the supreme being as Iswara, in which the worshipper sought to render his body and soul pure and holy in the sight of the creator. Sometimes it degenerated into a wretched asceticism, which cultivated a distaste for existence by pondering over the lower instincts and necessities of animal being, and quenched the fire of the passions by a depraved familiarity with the ashes and bones of the dead, and every species of filth and corruption. The worship of the female deity exhibited a similar variety of phases. Sometimes under the names of Durgá, Bhávani, or Párvati, she was adored as the divine ideal of the daughter, wife, or mother. Sometimes, as Bhadrá-Kálí, she was regarded as the patron deity of Thugs and prostitutes. She was also personified as Kálí, the black goddess, the terrible barbarian queen, who revelled in strong wine and flesh meat, in disgusting obscenity, and the blood of human sacrifices. The grosser forms of the worship of Siva and Durgá degenerated into the so-called Tantric religion, which once prevailed throughout a large portion of India, but which there is reason to believe has nearly disappeared from the land. In the Siva cult novices were exposed to every possible allurement, and expected to remain unmoved. In the Kálí cult nudity was worshipped in Bacchanalian orgies which cannot be described.

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[5] Faria y Sousa, vol. ii., page 377.

Sankha Achárya, the apostle of Siva, about A.D. 900.

The triumph of Siva over Buddha is to some extent illustrated by the life and career of Sankha Achárya, who may be termed the apostle of the Saiva religion in its more spiritual form. He was a native of Malabar, and belonged to the tribe of Nambúri Bráhmans. He flourished about the eighth or ninth century of the Christian era. He led the life of a wandering mendicant, and engaged in successful controversies with the Buddhists and Jains. According to local legend, Jain kings were reigning at Kalyan in the Dekhan, and Conjeveram in the Peninsula, who blasphemed the gods of the Bráhmans and endeavoured to subvert the Brahmanical faith. Accordingly Siva became incarnate as Sankha Achárya, in order to abolish the Jain religion and regulate and reform the Bráhmans. His sect is known as the Smárta, and largely prevails throughout the Peninsula. Its members are distinguished by three horizontal white stripes along their foreheads. Some are called Lingayets; their sect is known as the Jangam. They carry little images of the linga, as the representative of the supreme being, in small silver boxes hanging from the arm.[6] They bury their dead without burning. They live only on rice, vegetables, and cakes of various grains; and entirely abstain from flesh meat and wine.

Ramanuja Achárya, the apostle of Vishnu, about A.D. 1200.

The revival of the worship of Vishnu, the Herakles of the Greeks, seems to have commenced at a later date. Its followers were known as Vaishnavas in opposition to the Saivas or followers of Siva. Its chief apostles were Rámánuja Achárya who flour-

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[6] A variety of authorities might be quoted for the statements in the text, including Faria y Sousa, Abbé Dubois, Buchanan, Wilks, and the Mackenzie MSS., of which the author has a large folio volume of extracts and abstracts, compiled by himself more than ten years ago. The vitality of the Smárta religion is proved by the fact that the great Guru Sankha Achárya has been succeeded down to the present day by a line of Gurus, who have been either adopted by the preceding Guru whilst alive, or elected by the disciples after his decease. A successor or representative of the apostle was still living in 1871. His name was Narsingh Achárya. He is called by his disciples the Jagat Guru, or teacher of the world. He is the venerated pontiff of all Hindús holding the Smárta faith. He is a celibate, lives on milk, and is acquainted with Sanskrit, Kanarese, Tamil, and Telugu. He wears a tiara covered with pearls and jewels. In 1871 he was seventy-five years of age, and had adopted a successor. He travels in great state in a special palanquin with an elephant in attendance; and on such occasions is accompanied by a large cortége of Bráhmans and disciples. All the Hindú inhabitants of a town, the Raja not excepted, turn out on his approach to receive him with suitable reverence.—Bowring's Eastern Experiences, page 139. London, 1872.

CHAP. VIII.

ished at Conjeveram,[7] and Rámánand who flourished at Benares. Rámánuja may be referred to the twelfth century. He distinguished himself as the opponent of both Jains and Saivas; and was especially famous for casting out evil spirits and devils. Like Sankhar Achárya, he appears to have undertaken missionary circuits over the whole of the Peninsula, fixing his head-quarters at Sriringham, opposite the town of Trichinopoly. His particular sect is known as the Ayengar Vaishnavas, and is distinguished from the Smárta by a vertical mark like a trident, which is painted on the forehead just above the nose.[8] They abhor Siva, and call him the chief of the Rákshasas, and worship only the Vishnu group of deities. Rámánand of Benares was a disciple who had seceded from Rámánuja. He taught the worship of Vishnu through his incarnations as Ráma and Krishna; and especially sought to abolish caste. But before indicating the various phases in the religion of Vishnu, it will be necessary to glance at the origin and growth of the conception of that deity.

Conception of Vishnu and Lakshmi.

Vishnu was originally a personification of the Sun-god as a human hero more or less divine; the celestial ancestor of the Surya-vansa, or "children of the sun." This idea developed into that of deity; the bright god who imparted life and light to the universe; the supreme soul that illuminated the universe. In this way the conception of Vishnu assimilated itself to that of Brahma. But still the popular idea of his humanity, of God loving man, could never be eradicated from the popular mind. The worshipper ceased to identify Vishnu with the material sun. The god was supposed to dwell in the heaven of Vaikuntha far away in the blue ether; or in the fabled sea of milk which surrounded the universe;[9] but still taking a deep interest in the universe and its inhabitants, human and divine. A female divinity was given to him as a wife, the divine Lakshmí; the goddess of good fortune, wealth, and prosperity; the deified embodiment of all that is good and beautiful, pure and affectionate, in an ideal woman, whether as a daughter, a wife, or a mother. Lakshmí was the sea-born goddess; she had risen out of the ocean, like another Aphrodite, to become the bride of Vishnu.

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[7] Conjeveram, properly Kanchipura, or the golden city, was the capital of the ancient kingdom of Chola. It is situated about forty-eight miles to the south-west of Madras.

[8] The sectarian mark of the Vaishnavas is called the foot of Vishnu, which is represented by the trident. The sectarian of the Saivas is called the eye of Siva, and is generally in the centre of the forehead, in the middle of the three lines. Siva is fabled to have a third eye there.

Ten Avatáras of Vishnu.

The conception of Vishnu and Lakshmí, dwelling far away as a supreme spirit or spirits in the sea of milk, was too remote for popular sympathy. There was not even a symbol existing, like the linga, that would associate the god with humanity. Accordingly Vishnu was supposed to become incarnate from time to time, for the deliverance of the world from the oppression of giants or demons, the Daityas or Rákshasas of remote antiquity. These incarnations or avatáras are invested with historical significance. They are generally reckoned as ten in number, although in some sacred books there are unimportant additions. In reality they were nothing more than the old gods and heroes of ante-Brahmanical times, who were incorporated into the Brahmanical system, and reproduced as incarnations of Vishnu. In this manner Vishnu is said to have successively become incarnate in four animals,—the fish, the tortoise, the boar, and the lion; and in five human beings,—Vámana, Parasuráma, Ráma, Krishna, and Buddha; and finally he is to appear on a white horse, in what is known as the Kalki avatár, and to destroy the present universe, and bring into existence a purer and better world.

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[9] In Hindú geography the universe is a vast circle, consisting of alternate continents and seas formed into concentric rings. Jambu-dwípa, or the earth, is the centre; and the centre-point of the earth is mount Meru; the Himalayas of modern geography; the Meros, or thigh of Zeus, in which Dionysos was concealed after the death of his mother Semele. Jambu-dwípa was surrounded by a sea of salt water. The six remaining continents are of course mythical. The first after Jambu-dwípa was surrounded by a sea of sugar-cane juice; the next by a sea of wine; the next by a sea of melted butter; the next by a sea of curds; then followed the sea of milk; and last of all was a sea of fresh water.

Three Avatáras referring to the Deluge.

The myths by which these personifications are represented as incarnations, are the mere inventions of Brahmanical teachers; but they are nevertheless replete with meaning. The fish-god has been worshipped by many races from the earliest antiquity as the ocean deity. He was the Poseidon of the Greeks; the Neptune of the Romans. He is generally symbolized by a rude figure half human and half fish; but the idea was spiritualized by the Vedic Rishis into Varuna, the great god of elemental water, the supreme spirit of the deep seas. The tortoise and boar were apparently deities of a similar character; the gods or symbols of different races. All three deities appear in the Vishnu-avatára myths in association with some legend of a universal deluge. Thus Vishnu became incarnate as a fish in order to save Manu, the ancestor of the human race, from being drowned in the deluge. He became a tortoise in order to rescue the earth from the deluge by taking it on his back. He became a boar in order to recover the Vedas from the waste of waters. The myths connected with the remaining avatáras have a different significance. Vishnu became a lion in order to destroy certain giants, who were seeking to dethrone the gods. He became Vámana, or the dwarf, in order to destroy the giant Bali, who appears to be identical with Kansa in the Krishna legends. He became Parasuráma, in order to punish the Kshatriyas, who had cruelly oppressed the Bráhmans. He became Ráma in order to slay Rávana, the demon king of Lanká in Ceylon. He became Krishna in order to overthrow the tyrant Kansa. He became Buddha in order to delude the giants into neglecting the worship of the deities, and thereby exposing themselves to certain destruction. The last incarnation in the white horse avatára may be dismissed as a theological dream, originating in an idea, not uncommon amongst suffering humanity, that the world has sunk into a hopeless state of sin and sorrow; that man is helpless to work out the problem of his being; and that the advent of deity is necessary to the renovation of the universe.

Six Avatáras referring to Buddhism.

Six of these incarnations of Vishnu possess a substantive historical value, namely, the avatáras as a lion and dwarf, and those of Parasuráma, Ráma, Krishna, and Buddha. One idea runs through them all, namely, that Vishnu became incarnate in order to destroy the giants or demons who sought to dethrone the gods. These giants have been generally identified with the non-Vedic rulers of the country; and no doubt in very ancient legends, such as find occasional expression in the Vedic hymns, the aboriginal or pre-Aryan princes were regarded as giants;

and like the giants of nursery story were described as demons, ogres, man-eaters, Rákshasas, Daityas, and Asuras. But the myths of the incarnations or avatáras of Vishnu are of a comparatively modern date. They are not mentioned in the more ancient scriptures, such as the hymns of the Rig-Veda or the laws of Manu. They belong to the age of Brahmanical revival, when the persistent efforts of Buddhist teachers to deny the authority of the Vedas, and to dethrone or ignore the gods in general, had created an antagonism which culminated in a persecuting war. The colossal statues of Buddhas and Jain saints would suggest the idea of giants. The fact that Gótama and Adináth were both Kshatriyas would suggest the idea that the war was against Kshatriyas. The ninth avatára is a key to the whole. Vishnu became Buddha to delude the giants into abandoning the worship of the gods, and thereby working out their own destruction.

Incarnations of Vishnu as Ráma and Krishna.

Two of these myths, namely, the avatáras of Vishnu as Ráma and Krishna, have been interwoven with the main traditions of the Rámáyana and Mahá Bhárata, and impart a new and religious meaning to the Hindú epics. It will also be seen that a deeper significance underlies the sacred legend, than is involved in the mere antagonism between Brahmanism and Buddhism. The theology of the Bráhmans has always been too abstract and metaphysical for the masses. The bulk of mankind can only worship deified men and women; and unless their affections are brought into play, they have no real devotion. Indeed, without human love and human sympathies, religion drifts into a superstition of selfishness; a mere bartering of prayers, sacrifices, and alms in exchange for happiness or prosperity.

The leaders of the Brahmanical revival seem to have discerned this important truth. The compilers of the Rámáyana represented Ráma and Sítá as types of a husband and a wife, as well as incarnations of deity. They moved the heart of the Hindú to love and sympathy; and then awakened his adoration for the divine. They employed a mythological machinery, which will appear strange and cumbrous to the European; but which, nevertheless, satisfied the aspirations of the masses by reproducing the supreme spirit in human forms. Vishnu is represented as the supreme spirit, the god above all gods, whose paramount power as the suzerain of the universe was acknowledged by Brahma and all the Vedic deities. The story of his birth, marriage, and exile as Ráma is consequently surrounded by a haze of supernatural details. The Vedic deities are oppressed by Rávana, the giant or demon king of Lanká, the modern Ceylon. They apply to Brahma for succour; but Rávana has performed so many religious merits in former lives that Brahma is powerless to help them. Accordingly Brahma proceeded with the Vedic deities to the sea of milk, where Vishnu was dwelling in unutterable splendour. Vishnu answered their prayers. The supreme god engaged to become incarnate as Ráma, and so effect the destruction of Rávana.

Legend of Ráma as Vishnu.

The incarnation of Vishnu is related with such supernatural details as would accord with his divine character. Dasaratha, Maháraja of Ayodhyá, was without a son. Accordingly he celebrated a great sacrifice to obtain one. The gods came down from heaven and received their shares with their own

Birth of Ráma as a deliverer.

hands. A portion of the sacred food was given to the three queens, and Vishnu became incarnate in the first queen Kausalyá. At the moment of conception Brahma and the gods appeared in their chariots above the city of Ayodhyá, and sounded the praises of Ráma. At the moment of birth the gods again appeared in the sky and scattered flowers from heaven. The babe revealed his divinity to his mother alone. He was crowned with a diadem of pearls. He had four arms, holding respectively the shell, the chakra, the mace, and the lotos.[10] His mother knew that he was god and adored him. He then concealed his four-armed shape, and assumed that of an ordinary infant, and began to cry. The Mahá-raja heard the welcome sound and distributed treasures in alms.

Marriage of Ráma and Sitá.

When Ráma was approaching manhood the sage Viswámitra appeared at Ayodhyá. He explained to the Maháraja that Ráma was Vishnu, and that his female counterpart had been born at Mithilá as Sítá, the daughter of Raja Janaka. Accordingly Ráma was sent to Mithilá under the charge of Viswámitra, and married Sítá in due course; but Janaka stated that she was not actually his daughter, but was found under a furrow when turned up by the plough.[11]

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[10] The frequent representations of Hindú deities with four arms has long been a problem to Europeans. But the so-called idolatry of the Hindús is nothing more than theology in hieroglyphics; and the idols are often two or more conceptions of deities moulded into one form. Vishnu was at once the divine hero of the Kshatriyas, and the supreme spirit of the Bráhmans. As a hero he carried the chakra and mace; as a god he carried the shell and lotos. Ráma exhibits the two-fold character of a hero and devotee throughout his exile.

[11] See Adhyátma Rámáyana. History, vol. ii., Rámáyana. The myth that Sítá sprang from the earth belongs to a class of religious fables, which appear to have originated during the Brahmanical revival. It would seem that certain Bráhmans of this period endeavoured to revive the decaying worship of the

Exile of Ráma.

The account of the exile of Ráma is evidently a perversion of the original form of the tradition. Amongst the ancient Rajpoots the sentence of exile was carried out with funeral pomp, whenever a prince was deprived of his birthright or declared an outlaw. The ceremony was marked as a day of mourning in the calendar. The offender was clothed in black, and invested with a black sword and buckler, and then placed upon a black horse, and solemnly commanded to depart out of the limits of the kingdom. Some such ceremony was no doubt carried out in the case of Ráma;[12] but the Rámáyana represents him as a religious devotee.

Ráma, the champion of the Bráhmans.

The story of this exile presents many beautiful scenes, though it is tedious from the wildness of oriental exaggerations. Brahmanical hermitages are described with groves and pools of water, after the fashion of the hermitage where the Raja Dushyanta discovered the beautiful Sakúntalá. The holy men, however, are constantly harassed by the

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spirits or elemental deities of the Vedas, by converting the heroes and heroines of Kshatriya traditions into similar personifications. In order to carry out this purpose they appear to have introduced new names and myths into the Mahá Bhárata and Rámáyana. This attempt to revive the worship of the Vedic deities utterly failed. Mr Cox, in his Mythology of the Aryan nations, has propounded a theory which is too exclusively based upon these later myths.

[12] This ceremony was carried out as late as the seventeenth century in the case of Umra Sing, a prince of Marwar. (See Tod's Rajast'han, vol. i., p. 687; vol. ii., p. 44.) Umra went out of Marwar with his personal retainers, and entered the service of the emperor Shah Jehan, the son of Jehángír. He proved a true Rajpoot. He absented himself from court without leave, and spent a fortnight in hunting. On his return the emperor reprimanded and fined him, but he refused to pay. He was then summoned to the presence, but there he stabbed the paymaster to the heart, and drew his sword to cut down the emperor, but shivered the weapon against a pillar. He, however, plied his dagger with such reckless fury, that he slew five Mogul nobles before he was mortally wounded. His retainers perished after the old Rajpoot fashion. They put on saffron garments, and rushed to the palace sword in hand, and slaughtered all they met, until they were at last cut to pieces to a man.

demon Rákshasas, who spoil the sacrifices. The divine Ráma, and the equally divine Sítá, go from one hermitage to another as incarnations of Vishnu and Lakshmí, receiving adorations and praises from holy sages and pious women. All had been longing for the advent of Ráma; all were rejoicing that the hour of their deliverance was nigh. Ráma becomes the champion of the Bráhmans against the Rákshasas. Occasionally he encounters a demon, and then a combat is described with all the exuberant details, and love of the marvellous, which characterize the Hindú bards. Those whom he kills obtain salvation, and the gods wonder at his benevolence. Meantime the demon king is reigning at Lanká in palaces of gold and gems, seated in gardens of matchless beauty and fragrance, thronged with young and blooming damsels, and surrounded by impregnable fortifications of stone and iron.

Abduction of Sítá.

The subsequent action of the poem is of a very Asiatic character. The sister of Rávana is smitten with love for Ráma, and offers to become his wife. She is told that Ráma is already married to Sítá, and immediately rushes upon Sítá, on which Ráma's brother draws his sword and cuts off her nose and ears. She goes away breathing vengeance, and after some unimportant incidents, she appears before Rávana at Lanká. She dwells upon the beauty of Sítá, and the demon king is easily induced to attempt the capture of Ráma's wife. He puts on the garb of a religious mendicant, and proceeds to the hut of Ráma. The hero is absent, hunting a deer which had caught the fancy of Ráma. The brother of Ráma is also absent, for Sítá had petulantly insisted on his going out to help Ráma.

The result was that Rávana engaged Sítá in delusive conversation, and finally seized her and carried her away to his chariot, and then drove through the air to his palace at Lanká. But Sítá would not listen to his suit. If he had vanquished Ráma she would have been compelled to become his wife; but until he had conquered Ráma, he had established no right over her. Such was the ancient law of war amongst the Kshatriyas.[13]

Ráma's alliance with the Monkey Raja.

Ráma is in an agony of grief at the loss of his beloved Sítá. He bewails her in a fashion which is scarcely compatible with his divine character. He searches for her in all directions, and at length discovers the fate that has befallen her. A monkey prince, named Sugríva, had beheld Rávana and Sítá driving through the air. Moreover, Sítá had thrown some of her ornaments from the chariot; and these had been preserved by Sugríva, and were at once identified by Ráma. An alliance is concluded between Ráma and Sugríva. The monkey prince has been deprived of his kingdom and his wife. Ráma enables him to recover both, and in return Sugríva sends his monkey armies to help Ráma.[14]

Victory of Ráma over Rávana.

Ráma now prepared to march his army against Rávana. A celebrated monkey chieftain, named Hanuman, had leaped over the strait which separates India from Lanká, and found Sítá in the royal gardens, and assured her that deliverance was nigh. Hanuman committed great havoc in the garden, and was ultimately seized by the guards and brought before the demon king. As a punishment his tail was dipped in melted butter and set on fire; but the monkey escaped from his tormentors, and set fire to the whole city with his burning tail, and then hastened off to carry the glad tidings to Ráma. War was commenced at once. The monkeys are fabled to have built a vast bridge of stone from the continent to the island, and huge rocks are pointed out to this day as the remains of Ráma's bridge. At last, after a series of battles, Ráma and Rávana engaged in a combat of life and death, and the demon king was slain by the hand of Vishnu. But Rávana saved his soul. In his heart he had always adored Ráma. He had perished by the hand of Ráma. The picture of Ráma was before his eye, and the name of Ráma was on his lips, as he drew his last breath; and his soul was seen to issue from his body in the form of flame and enter the foot of Ráma.[15]

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[13] See *ante*, p. 23, *et seq*.

[14] An army of bears also joined the monkeys, but their exploits are not deserving of special notice.

Ráma and Krishna compared.

The legend of Krishna is different from that of Ráma, but indicates a warmer devotion and more impassioned love. Ráma is a family deity, the type of the husband and master of the household. He is proud and serene after the ideal of the Hindú householder. But Krishna is the playful, handsome hero, the universal lover who is idolized by every woman who sees him. Even wives and mothers are fascinated by his presence, and thrilled by his smiles.

Birth of Krishna as a cowherd.

Krishna was born amongst the cows in the pleasant meadows of Vrindávana on the left bank of the river Jumna. His father Nanda was a cowherd of the tribe of Yádavas. The Yádavas were herdsmen, who found their way into western India, and wandered about in carts selling milk and butter in the various towns in the Jumna valley. Opposite to Vrindávana, on the other side of the river Jumna, was the famous city of Mathurá. It stands about half way between Agra and Delhi. The king of Mathurá was an usurper and a tyrant, named Kansa. He was an ally of Jarásandha, the great Raja of Magadha, who reigned over the empire of the Gangetic valley after the manner of Sandrokottos, Asoka, and Síláditya. Kansa had married the two daughters of Jarásandha. Both Kansa and Jarásandha were worshippers of Siva. Kansa had dethroned the Suras, because they persisted in the worship of Vishnu.

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[15] For full details, see History, vol. ii., Rámáyana.

Kansa, the usurper and tyrant.

But Krishna was not the actual son of the cowherd. All was Mayá or delusion. In reality he was a son of Vasudeva and Devakí of the royal house of Sura.[16] The tyrant Kansa had heedlessly permitted Vasudeva and Devakí to marry. He had himself driven the bride and bridegroom in his chariot in the marriage procession. But a voice was heard from heaven saying,—"The son of Devakí will be the destroyer of Kansa." Then the tyrant was filled with a mortal fear. He seized the bride by the hair and dragged her from the chariot, and drew his sword to slay her. The trembling bridegroom was in an agony. He would make any sacrifice to save Devakí. He took an oath to deliver to the tyrant every child that should be born. So Kansa stayed his hand, and Vasudeva led away his bride.

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[16] The genealogy is not very clear. Kansa was himself a Sura. The point is not of much consequence in dealing with the legend.

Birth of Krishna as a prince of the Suras.

Henceforth the wife dreaded lest she should become a mother; the husband dreaded lest his wife should bear a child. At last the trouble came. Kansa knew it was coming. Husband and wife were bound and manacled; the house was locked and barred; and strong guards were posted all around. At night Krishna was born and revealed himself as Vishnu. At that moment the manacles fell to the ground, the doors were opened, and the guards thrown into a deep sleep. The father placed the child in a basket to carry it across the Jumna. It was the rainy season, and the river was swollen to its utmost height. At the touch of Krishna's foot the river became shallow. The rain fell heavily, but Sesha-nága, the many-headed serpent, followed Vasudeva, and canopied the father and the child with his stupendous hoods. In this manner Vasudeva crossed the Jumna, and reached the village of the cowherds. Yasodá, the wife of Nanda, had given birth to a daughter; and Vasudeva changed it for Krishna, and no one knew it. He took the infant girl to his wife's chamber; and at that moment the house was barred, and Vasudéva and Devakí were again in manacles. The infant cried and the guards were awakened. The news of the birth was carried to Kansa. He rushed to the house to kill the child, but the babe ascended to heaven, saying,—"A son is born who will destroy the house of Kansa." Then Kansa was filled with wrath, and ordered that every male child should be slain throughout the land.[17]

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[17] Up to this point there is a remarkable resemblance between some incidents

Boyhood of Krishna: his amours.

The legend of Krishna now begins to assume something of a human character. Demons are said to have attempted to take the life of the child, and were in turns slaughtered by the infant hero; but otherwise the story is simple and domestic. The little Krishna, dressed in a blue frock, is the delight of his mother Yasodhá. He stumbles about the courtyard, and seizes the tails of the cows and heifers. As he grows older he seems to be imbued with the spirit of mischief. He upsets his mother's butter-churn; and steals the butter from the milk-maids. But still a divine element is exhibited at intervals. On one occasion his mother was about to correct him, when he opened his mouth and showed her the three worlds. One day when the milk-maids were bathing in the Jumna, he ran off with their clothes; and this prank is converted into a religious myth; the milk-maids were punished for having profaned the holy Jumna. But as Krishna

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in the legend of Krishna and the gospel narrative. But the resemblance is not that of coincidence but of caricature. Mathurá was the Jerusalem of the Vaishnavas, and Vrindávana was their Bethlehem. Kansa was king Herod; the house of Sura whom he had deposed was the house of David. Jarásandha of Magadhá represented the power of imperial Rome. But Krishna was not born of a Virgin, nor was his reputed father a carpenter. His father Nanda kept cows, and his mother Yasodhá made butter. The antagonism between Vishnu and Siva was, however, strangely analogous to that between Christianity and Judaism. At the birth of Krishna the religious life at Mathurá bore a materialistic resemblance to that which prevailed at Jerusalem at the commencement of the Christian era. The worship of Vishnu, the religion of faith and love, was in abeyance; but the world was in a state of anxious expectation of his coming. The worship of Siva, the religion of good works and sacrifices, was in the ascendant; but the deity was in peril.

But notwithstanding this general resemblance, there was one vital disagreement. The seed of the woman was to bruise the head of the serpent; but the great serpent appeared as the guardian of Krishna.

Another son, known as Bala-ráma, is said to have been a brother of Krishna, and to have been brought up like him in the house of a cowherd. Bala-ráma was devoted to wine, just as Krishna was devoted to women. The conception, however, has found no expression in popular Hinduism. This story is related in History, vol. i., Mahá Bhárata, and Legends of Krishna.

grew older he became the idol of all the women. They devoted themselves body and soul to him. At the sound of his flute they followed him into the jungle, and danced and sang around him. He was a universal lover, and he reigned supreme in every heart. But he had one favourite mistress in the beautiful Radhá. When he sought the company of Radhá, the rest wept bitterly; when he returned to them, their sorrow was turned into joy.

Victory of Krishna over Kansa.

At last the time arrived when Krishna was to destroy Kansa; when Vishnu was to triumph over Siva. The catastrophe is surrounded with myth and miracle. Krishna paid a visit to Mathurá, and played his usual pranks. There was a great exhibition of fighting and wrestling before the Raja. The feats of Krishna excited universal applause, and at length awakened the suspicion and jealousy of Kansa. A quarrel broke out; a combat ensued between Krishna and Kansa, in which Kansa was slain. The son of Sura was restored to the throne of Mathurá, and Krishna became a hero of might and renown.

Migration of Krishna to Guzerat.

But the widows of Kansa returned to their father Jarásandha. The wrath of the old sovereign of Magadhá was aroused against Krishna. A war ensued which is scarcely intelligible. In the end Krishna retired to Dwáraká, in western Guzerat.[18] He carried away Rukminí, the daughter of the Raja of Vidarbha, and made her his wife. Henceforth he was celebrated for the number of his wives; but the further details respecting Krishna are interwoven into the traditions of the Mahá Bhárata.[19]

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[18] If Buddha may be read instead of Siva, the story of the war between Krishna and Jarásandha may have a religious meaning. When Alexander invaded India, Vishnu was worshipped at Mathurá on the banks of the Jumna. Arrian (India, chap. viii.) expressly states that Herakles (Vishnu) was worshipped by the Suraseni (the descendants of Sura). The Suraseni had two great cities, Methoras (Mathurá) and Cleisoboras (Súrapura) near the river Jobares (Jumna). See Colonel Tod's "Comparison of the Hindú and Theban Herakles," Asiatic Journal, vol. v., 1831. The worship of Vishnu may have been subsequently superseded by Buddhism, as indicated by Fah-Hian (see *ante*, page 252); this fact finds expression in the legend of Kansa and Jarásandha. At a still later

Saivism, or salvation by merits: Vaishnavism, or salvation by faith.

The worship of Siva is the religion of good works. The worship of Vishnu, whether as Ráma or as Krishna, is the religion of faith and devotion. The two currents of religious thought may occasionally intermingle in either religion; but still the general line of demarcation may be retained between the two.[20] The religion of Siva taught that the soul is saved by good works, such as penances and sacrifices; but it degenerated into the gross materialism of the Tantras. The religion of Vishnu taught that the soul is saved by faith and devotion. In the incarnation of Ráma, faith and love were symbolized by the confidence and affection which prevail between the husband and the wife. In the incarnation of Krishna, faith and love are symbolized by the worship and passion which are associated with the bridegroom and the bride. The religion of Krish-

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period the worship of Krishna as Vishnu revived in Mathurá and the Jumna valley; this fact is partly indicated by Hiouen-Thsang (see *ante*, page 268), Ever since the visit of Hiouen-Thsang Mathurá has been the centre of the worship of Krishna.

[19] The whole of the incidents connecting Krishna with the Pándavas may be dismissed as mythical interpolations of a comparatively modern date. The incidents are mere redundancies, in no way necessary to the plot; and his appearance is generally surrounded with some supernatural element which sufficiently betrays its mythical character. They will, however, be found exhibited in the first volume of the present history, in which they are criticized at length.

[20] The religion of both Siva and Vishnu have been largely modified by Buddhism; so much so that Siva sometimes represents Buddha, whilst Krishna still more often appears in the same character. The worship of Krishna as Jaganáth is evidently a relic of Buddhism. The idol is carried like the procession of the images of Buddha. Moreover, within the sacred precincts of Jaganáth all caste is laid aside.

na thus presents attractions to the warm Asiatic which can scarcely be conceived by Europeans. The more advanced and spiritual worshippers regard his pranks and amours as Mayá, or delusion; the amusements of the hero before he was conscious of being the deity incarnate; and they adore the idol as the supreme spirit, who dwells in every heart, and is himself the universe. But the mother worships the handsome boy as well as the supreme spirit; the boy who stole the butter and kissed the milkmaids, as well as the youthful deity who opened his mouth and displayed the three worlds. To the neglected wife or the desolate widow, Krishna assumes a warmer character. He is young, beautiful, and divine; the passionate and universal lover. The worshipper aspires to become another Radhá. Ultimately the religion became depraved. A class of impostors appeared who claimed to be incarnations of Krishna; and deluded their votaries into sacrificing their chastity under the plea of being beloved by Krishna, of devoting all to Krishna. Such was the so-called religion of the Mahárajas of Bombay.[21] India, however, has not been without her reformers. Perhaps the most celebrated is Choitunya, who flourished in Bengal during the early part of the sixteenth century. He revolted against the gross materialism of the age, and especially against the orgies of the Tantras. He imparted a spiritual meaning to the life and acts of Krishna, made war upon caste, denounced widow-burning, and recommended the re-marriage of widows. He made Nuddea his centre, but travelled to Gour, Benares, Vrindávana, and Púree. He did not succeed in carrying out all his views, especially as regards the re-marriage of widows, but to this day one-fifth of the population of Bengal, including all the opulent native families of Calcutta, are followers of Choitunya.[22]

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[21] History of the Sect of Mahárajas or Vallabhácháryas in western India. Trübner, 1865. Report of the Maharaj Libel Case. Bombay, 1862. A detestable but indescribable materialism, belonging to a primitive worship, seems also to have been associated with a lower form of the Krishna religion, but it has long since been banished to the most remote and secluded localities.

Worship of Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva as the Trimúrti.

The association of Siva and Vishnu with humanity have imparted a vitality to the conceptions of those deities which is wanting in that of Brahma. In former times there was an antagonism between the Saivas and Vaishnavas, which ranged them into hostile camps; but in the present day this antagonism is dying out, and the votaries of both deities are engaged in the worship of the supreme being, who is equally identified with Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva. The worship of these three forms of the supreme spirit has thus become the life and soul of modern Hinduism. Sometimes they are separately adored as the creator, the preserver, and the destroyer of the universe, under the name of the Trimúrti, or "three forms;" but they are frequently worshipped as the three in one, and the name of one includes the name of all. The pious Hindú bows his head alike to Vishnu and Siva, to Ráma and Krishna, to Lakshmí and Durgá, or to any of the countless types of deity; but he mutters the mystic word Óm, which includes all the deities, and believes himself to be worshipping the one and the supreme.[23]

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[22] Travels of a Hindoo, by Bholanauth Chunder, vol. i.

[23] The term Óm is the symbol of the Trimúrti. In the original Sanskrit it is spelt with three letters, which may correspond to the letters **A**, **V**, **M**; the **A** representing Brahma; the **V** representing Vishnu; and the **M** representing Siva. In the more ancient Brahmanical ritual, the term included all the gods of earth, sky, and heaven. See History, vol. ii., part v., Brahmanic Period.

Miscellaneous deities.

Besides these three great gods, there is a vast number of other deified existences in the Hindú pantheon. They may belong to extinct mythologies; but they are often regarded as forms of one or other of the three great gods,—Brahma, Vishnu, or Siva; or of one or other of their corresponding goddesses,—Saraswatí, Lakshmí, and Durgá.[24] Thus there are the seven Rishis sprung from Brahma; the ten Avatáras of Vishnu; the eleven Rudras or forms of Siva; the eight guardian deities of the universe. Others are invested with individual characteristics, which still render them objects of popular worship. Amongst these are Ganésha, the elephant-headed deity of good luck; Kuvera, the god of wealth; Kartikeya, the god of war; Káma, the god of amorous desire; Yama, the god of the infernal regions and judge of the dead. There are also other objects of worship, such as the Sun, the Moon, the Planets, the Serpent, the Bull, the Cow, the Earth, and the Rivers. The names and attributes of these deified existences awaken no associations in the mind of Europeans, and throw no light upon the religious ideas of the Hindús. Indeed they are often dismissed as the offspring of a blind and obstinate idolatry, which corrupts the heart and intellect of the Hindú; when they ought rather to be regarded as crude developments of the affections, which will be abandoned with the advance of education and civilization.

The usages of the people, however, fall under a very different category. They are well worthy of study as illustrations of the earlier forms of religious development among the human race. They are best gathered from the narratives of the older European travellers, who faithfully recorded all they saw, and whose truthfulness will be attested by all who are familiar with the sacred books, or with the habits and manners of existing populations.

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[24] In the more abstract developments of the Hindú religion, the conceptions of gods and goddesses are reduced to mere emblems of the male and female energies, as the first causes of the universe.

Religious usages, as described by old European travellers.

Travels of Marco Polo, 1260-1295.

The first traveller on record, who visited India after Hiouen-Thsang, was Marco Polo the Venetian. Marco Polo flourished in the latter half of the thirteenth century, when Edward the First sat upon the throne of England, and the last crusade was drawing to a close. He knew nothing of Hindustan or Bengal; but he was acquainted with the coasts of the Dekhan and Peninsula from Guzerat to Comorin, and from Comorin to the kingdom of Telinga or Telugu. His travels appear to have been written at Comorin, the most southerly point of India. He is the first traveller who mentions Comorin. Indeed, notwithstanding its remarkable position, Comorin has never attracted the attention of any Hindú geographer, ancient or modern. He describes it as a very wild country, abounding in bears, lions, and leopards, and especially in monkeys. The monkeys seem to have attracted his particular attention. He says that they were of such peculiar fashion, that they might have been taken for men; a remark which suggests the origin of the monkey warriors in the Rámáyana.[25] The region derives its name from a temple which was erected there in honour of Kumárí, "the Virgin;" the infant babe who had been exchanged for Krishna, and ascended to heaven at the approach of Kansa.[26]

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[25] Marco Polo, Book iii., chap. 23. The edition of the works of this traveller by Colonel Yule is a valuable boon to the student of Asiatic history. The notes are the results of large experience and extensive reading.

Coromande country: character of the people.

Eastward of Comorin was the Coromandel country; the ancient Chola-mandalum. It is the land of the Tamil-speaking people, and extends northward along the Bay of Bengal as far as Telinga or the Telugu country.[27] Marco Polo describes the people almost as they might be described now. They were black, naked idolaters, who wore nothing but a cloth around their loins. They worshipped the cow and bull, and no one save the Pariahs would eat beef. They would not kill any animal, so that those who wanted flesh meat, such as kid or mutton, employed Saracens or other foreigners as butchers.[28] They plastered their houses with cow-dung. They all sat upon the ground, kings and nobles, as well as common people. The wealthier classes slept in beds of light cane-work, which were drawn up to the ceiling for the sake of coolness, and to escape the bites of tarantulas, or mosquitoes. When a child was born they wrote down his nativity; that is to say, they noted down the hour, day, month, and age of the moon. The children were black enough, but the parents rubbed them every week with oil of sesamé, which made them as black as devils. They painted their gods black and their devils white.[29]

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[26] See *ante*, page 378. Faria y Sousa, vol. ii., page 394. Colonel Yule identifies Kumárí with Durgá. This is an error. The temple of Kumárí was erected by Krishna Raja of Narsinga, a zealous patron of the Vaishnavas.

[27] The frontier between the Tamil and Telugu languages is at Pulicat, twenty-three miles to the northward of Madras. The Dutch built a square fort here in 1609, for the protection of their trade in painted cottons and muslins, for which Telinga was celebrated in former times. Pulicat lake is a favourite pleasure haunt for residents at Madras.

[28] By Saracens Marco Polo seems to refer to Mussulmans generally.

[29] This is correct. Vishnu in his incarnation as Krishna is always painted

Criminals condemned to death were allowed to sacrifice themselves in honour of some idol. Widows burnt themselves with their dead husbands, and received great praise for so doing. The men marched naked to battle, armed only with the lance and buckler, and were wretched soldiers.[30] The kings were black and naked like their subjects. One is described as wearing three golden bracelets thickly set with the richest pearls; anklets of like kind on his legs; necklaces of rubies, emeralds, and sapphires round his neck; and rings of gold on his toes. He also wore upon his chest a rosary, consisting of one hundred and four large rubies and pearls; and every day, morning and evening, he uttered a hundred and four prayers to his idols.[31]

Five Tamil kingdoms.

The Tamil country was divided into five kingdoms, which are not separately named by Marco Polo, but probably corresponded to the territories of Tinnevelly, Madura, Tanjore, Gingee, and Chola proper. They may have been disjointed members of the old empire of Chola or Dravida, for the five

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black or dark blue. Siva, or "the devil" of old European travellers, is painted white, as being "silver-coloured."

[30] Marco Polo was possibly prejudiced. His judgment was probably formed on a comparison of the Tamil soldiery with the disciplined forces of Italy.

[31] Marco Polo, Book iii., chap. 16—23. The rosaries of the Buddhists consist of a hundred and eight beads. The present rosary was probably connected with the worship of Krishna or Vishnu; and the so-called prayers were merely utterances of the sacred names of the god, which were supposed to be an expression of faith, and therefore to ensure salvation. The following refrain is very popular in Bengal; the author, however, is quoting only from memory:—

"Hári, Krishna, Hári, Krishna,
Krishna, Krishna, Ráma, Ráma,
Hári, Ráma, Hári, Ráma,
Krishna, Ráma, Hári, Hári."

The Bengalees teach this refrain to their parrots, and believe that they thereby acquire religious merits both for themselves and the birds.

kings were all brethren. Marco Polo says that the brethren often prepared for war against each other, but were prevented by their mother who was still living. On occasions when battle seemed imminent, the queen-dowager drew a sword and declared that she would cut away the paps that gave them suck, and the womb that gave them birth, unless they stayed their arms. Marco Polo was satisfied that when she died the five kings would ruin themselves by war.

The Tamil kings.

The kings had immense zenanas. One is said to have maintained five hundred wives, for their dignity was estimated by the number of their women. It is added that whenever he heard of a beautiful damsel, he sent for her and made her his wife. He had naturally a large number of children. The king had a number of "barons" who rode with him, and kept always near him, and exercised great authority in the kingdom. They were called his trusty lieges. When the king died, and his remains were burnt on the funeral pile, these lieges threw themselves into the fire and perished with him, saying, that as they had been comrades in this life, so they would be his comrades in the next. When the king died none of his children would touch his treasures, but collected separate treasures for themselves.[32]

The temple women.

The dancing-girls of the temples are also quaintly described by Marco Polo. "In this country," he says, "there are certain abbeys in which are gods and goddesses, and here fathers and mothers often consecrate their daughters to the service of deity. When the priests desire to feast their god, they send for these damsels, who serve the god with meats and other goods, and then sing and dance before him, for about as long as a great baron would be eating his dinner. Then they say that the god has devoured the essence of the food, and fall to and eat it themselves."[33]

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[32] Marco Polo, *ibid.* The principal kingdom is called Maaber, and Colonel Yule identifies it with Chola. Marco Polo says that the kingdom is also named Soli. The name of the king is said to be Sonder Bondi Davar. Possibly, however, the name of Maaber is a form of Madura. Many pearls are said to have been found there.

Emporium at Old Káyal.

The great commercial port on the coast of Coromandel was the city of Cail in the district of Tinnavelly. Marco Polo describes it as a great and noble city, an emporium of the trade with Aden and the Persian Gulf. The imports chiefly consisted of horses. The king was one of the five brethren already mentioned. He had three hundred wives. The town has been successfully identified with Old Káyal. In the present day it has shrivelled into a fishing village, but relics of its former greatness still remain, and prove it to have been a great resort of Chinese traders in the remote part. For two or three miles along the coast the plain is strewed with tiles and pottery of Chinese make, and the ruins of the old fortifications, temples, store-houses, wells, and tanks are still to be found.[34]

Shrine of St Thomas near Madras.

The shrine of St. Thomas on the mount near Madras was already in existence in the thirteenth century. According to pious legend this apostle visited India in the first century of the Christian era, and converted many of the inhabitants; and Marco Polo duly describes the locality. "The tomb of St Thomas," he says, "is to be found in a little town having a small population. Few traders visit the place, because there is very little merchandise there, and it is not very accessible. But Christians and Saracens make pilgrimages to it; the Saracens regarding the saint as a holy man. The earth near the tomb was taken away by the Christian pilgrims, for by the power of God, and the blessing of St Thomas, it is a cure for certain fevers."[35]

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[33] Marco Polo, Book iii., chaps. 16 and 17. This institution still prevails. It appears to have originated, like female infanticide, from the difficulty experienced in finding suitable husbands for daughters. The girls become mistresses to the priests, or lead a life of prostitution.

[34] Dr Caldwell appears to have first discovered the true Cail of Marco Polo. Old Káyal is situated near the mouth of the Tamraparní river. In the present day it is a mile and a half from the sea. The silting up of the ancient harbour has formed a waste sandy tract between the town and the sea, and thus deprived the port of all commercial value.

Kingdom of Telinga or Telugu.

Marco Polo refers to the kingdom of Telinga, to the northward of the Tamil country, but does not appear to have visited it. He describes the diamonds that are to be found there, and no doubt refers to the ancient mines of Golcónda, not far from the coast. The kingdom of Telinga was governed by a queen. The country was famous for the fineness of the buckrams manufactured there;[36] and indeed was celebrated for its cottons down to a very recent period.

Malabar country.

Westward of Comorin was the Malabar country, the ancient Kerala. It was the land of the Malayalam, the Kanarese, and the Mahratta-speaking people, and extends northward along the Indian Ocean to the peninsula of Guzerat. Marco

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[35] Marco Polo, Book iii., chap. 18. Fah-Hian (chap. xxiii.) says that the people in the neighbourhood of the tomb of Kásyapa use the earth as a cure for head-aches. It will be seen hereafter that the shrine of St Thomas is probably of Buddhist origin.

[36] The diamonds were said to be obtained by throwing pieces of meat into the valley where the diamonds were. The white eagles carried away the meat with the diamonds sticking to it. The eagles were then frightened into dropping the meat. The same story is told by Sindbad the sailor in the Arabian Nights.

Polo describes in succession the kingdoms of Travarum, Cananore, Malabar, and Konkana. The kings of the several states were independent and paid no tribute. The people of each kingdom appear to have had a dialect of their own.

Travancore.

The kingdom of Travancore[37] contained some Christians and some Jews. The city of Quilon was a great mart for ships from Arabia and the Levant on the one side, and from southern China on the other. The people had no corn, only rice. They made good wine from palm-sugar. Every other necessary of life was cheap and abundant. They had good astrologers and physicians. Men and women were all black and naked, excepting that they wore a fine cloth from the middle downwards. Sins of the flesh were not regarded as sins. The people married their first cousins. They also married the widows of their brothers, but this custom prevailed over all India.[38]

Cananore.

The kingdom of Cananore had no harbour, but rivers with navigable estuaries. Pepper, ginger, and other spices were procured there in great plenty. Ships bound for Cananore were received with every respect; but those which anchored there by mere accident were seized and plundered on the plea that God had sent the ship to the people, and this evil custom prevailed all over India.[39]

Malabar was a great kingdom, but a nest of

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[37] Marco Polo calls it Coulam, after its capital of Quilon, Book iii., chap. 22.

[38] Marco Polo, *ibid.* It was not the people of Travancore, but the Kallans of Madura, who were accustomed to marry their first cousins. In the present day a Kallan boy of fifteen must marry a cousin, even if she is thirty or forty, if the father of the woman insists upon it. See Nelson's Madura, Part ii., p. 57. Madras, 1868.

[39] Marco Polo, Book iii., chap. 24. He calls the country Eli. See Yule's notes on the chapter.

Malabar proper.

pirates. Every year a hundred corsair vessels went out to cruise. Twenty or thirty joined in one fleet and formed a line a hundred miles in length, having a ship at every interval of five miles. This line scoured the seas. Whenever a corsair sighted a merchantman, he made a signal of fire and smoke which was repeated along the line. The whole fleet then bore down upon the ship, and plundered her of her cargo and then let her go. In Marco Polo's time, however, the merchants were sailing in such large vessels that they could set the pirates at defiance.[40]

Konkana.

The kingdom of Konkaná lay to the north of Malabar. It apparently extended northward as far as Guzerat, and included the modern Bombay.[41] Marco Polo describes the Bráhmans of this country as the best merchants in the world.[42] Nothing would induce them to tell a lie. They would neither eat flesh nor drink wine. They were faithful to their wives, very honest, and distinguished by the thread. The king was rich and powerful. He was eager to purchase large pearls and precious stones. He sent his merchants to the Chola country to buy them, and paid them double the cost price. The people were great idolaters, and paid the utmost heed to signs and omens. They were very long lived. They never allowed themselves to be bled. They had capital teeth in consequence of the betel which they chewed. There was a class of people amongst them who were more properly Bráhmans, and were called

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[40] Marco Polo, Book iv., chap. 25. This kingdom was Malabar proper.

[41] Marco Polo calls this region Lar. See Colonel Yule's notes on chap. 20.

[42] Marco Polo has given the name of Bráhmans to the Banians. The Banians of western India are treated as Vaisyas and wear the thread. The Banians of Bengal are treated as Sudras and do not wear the thread.

Yogis.[43] They formed a religious order, and were devoted to their idols. Every man lived to be a hundred and fifty or two hundred years old. They would only eat a little, but that little was good, and generally consisted of rice and milk. Every month they drank a strange mixture of sulphur and quicksilver, on the ground that it made them long lived. Certain members of this order led the most ascetic lives. They went stark naked and worshipped the ox. Most of them carried a little image of an ox in gold or brass upon their foreheads.[44] They burnt cow-dung and reduced it to a white powder, and made an ointment with which they daubed themselves. They did not eat from bowls or trenchers, but from plantain leaves. They would not destroy the smallest insect. They admitted no novice into their order, until he had proved himself indifferent to every temptation which the temple women could offer.[45] They burnt the bodies of their dead rather than buried them, as otherwise worms would have been generated, which would starve to death after the body was consumed.

Guzerat

The people of Guzerat were famous then, as they are now, for their inlaid and embroidered leather work. They made beautiful cushions embroidered with gold; and exquisite mats, inlaid with figures of birds and beasts, and embroidered with gold and silver wire.[46] Marco Polo also mentions Tana near Bombay, and Cambay and Somnath in Guzerat, as separate kingdoms, and places of great trade.

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[43] Marco Polo spells the word Chughis.

[44] This was the Nanda or bull, an emblem of Síva. The Smárta sect wear the linga. See *ante*, page 365.

[45] This was part of the Tantric religion already noticed. See *ante*, page 364.

[46] Marco Polo, Book iii., chap. 26. Also Sir Bartle Frere's note on the passage.

Travels of Fitch through Hindustan, 1585.

In the latter part of the sixteenth century a light is thrown upon Hindustan. In 1585 an English merchant, named Ralph Fitch, made his way from Agra to the Bay of Bengal.[47] At that time the whole of western Hindustan was included in the Mogul empire of Akber, excepting where the Rajpoots still maintained a sullen independence. The peninsula of Guzerat, and neighbouring territory on the continent, had long been in the possession of a separate Mussulman dynasty, and had only been recently conquered by Akber.[48]

Agra.

At Agra Mr Fitch went on board a boat, which was one of a fleet of a hundred and eighty vessels which were laden with salt, opium, indigo,[49] lead, carpets, and other commodities. The chief merchants on board were Mussulmans and Hindús. They were proceeding down the Jumna and Ganges to the old port of Satgong on the Húghli.[50] On the river after leaving Agra Mr Fitch saw the Bráhmans engaged in their religious bathings, praying in the water naked, and wearing the sacred thread. The Bráhmans of this country would not eat flesh, or kill anything. They lived on rice, butter, milk, and fruits. They marked themselves every morning on the forehead, ears, and throat with powdered sandalwood. Some old men also went about the streets with a box of the yellow powder, and marked men on their foreheads and necks as they met them. The women came to the river in tens, twenties, and thirties, and washed themselves, and performed certain ceremonies, marked themselves on their foreheads and faces, and then returned singing to their homes.[51] Their daughters were married at the age of ten, and sometimes before. The people were even more crafty than the Jews. When they saluted they heaved up their hands to their faces and said, "Ráma," "Ráma."[52]

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[47] Mr Ralph Fitch is a remarkable character. He possessed keen powers of observation, and great personal courage. General Fytche, the late chief commissioner of British Burma, is descended from him. Mr Fitch left London in company with two other adventurers in the year 1583, when Queen Elizabeth was on the throne of England. The little party embarked on board a ship bound for Syria; and subsequently made their way overland through western Asia to the Persian Gulf. There they were seized and imprisoned by the Portuguese governor of Ormuz, and sent on to the Viceroy at Goa; and must have reached that place about the same time that Lanschoten visited the island. (See *infra*, chap. ix.) On his way Mr Fitch landed at the Portuguese town of Chaul, and described the manners of the people of that neighbourhood, much as Marco Polo had described them two centuries before. He says:—"They worship the cow, and plaster the walls of their houses with its dung. They will kill nothing, not so much as a louse. They will eat no flesh, but live on roots, rice, and milk. When the husband dies, his wife is burnt with him; if she refuses, her head is shaved and she is held in no account. They will not bury their dead, because the body would generate worms, and when it is consumed the worms would starve." At Goa Mr Fitch was thrown into prison, but released on giving a money security. Having reason, however, to fear harder treatment, he escaped with his companions over the river to the main, and proceeded to Bíjapúr, and thence to Burhanpur and Agra. The narrative of his travels before reaching Agra contains nothing of historical or geographical value.

[48] The description of Mussulman India in the sixteenth century is reserved for the next volume, which will deal with Mussulman history.

[49] Fitch spells the word "hinge." This is perhaps the old English word for indigo.

Prayága.

From Agra Mr Fitch reached Prayága, which was not then known by its modern name of Allahabad. Here was the confluence of the Jumna and Ganges. In those parts there were many tigers, as well as numerous partridges, turtle-doves, and other fowl. Mr Fitch saw many naked mendicants. One in particular was a perfect monster. His hair and beard hung down to his knees. Some of his nails were two inches long. He would speak to no one, but was accompanied by eight or ten followers who spoke for him.

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[50] Satgong was a fort of considerable consequence in the sixteenth century; but the river has since deserted it, and it has dwindled to an inconsiderable village. The two famous forts in those days were Satgong on the Húghli and Chittagong on the Ganges.

[51] The women singing the praises of Krishna are still to be seen in this neighbourhood. Indeed the scenes described by Fitch will be recognized by every Indian traveller.

[52] Fitch's Voyage to Ormus and the East Indies. Pinkerton's Collection, vol. ix., page 406.

Benares.

The next place was Benares. This was a great town with large stores of cotton cloth. The people were all Hindús, and the worst idolaters that Mr Fitch had ever seen. Hindús of distant countries came here on pilgrimage. The houses on the banks were very fair, and most of them had images of stone or wood; some were like leopards and monkeys; others were like men, women, and peacocks; and others were like the devil, with four arms and four hands. The chief idols were very ill-favoured; their mouths were monstrous; their ears gilded and full of jewels; their teeth and eyes of gold, silver, or glass. The idols were black in colour, and had lamps continually burning before them. No one might enter a house or a temple without taking off his shoes. At daybreak, and often before, men and women came out of the town to bathe in the Ganges. Old men were sitting praying around, who gave the people straws to hold in their fingers whilst they bathed. Others were there to mark the foreheads of the people after bathing. In return the bathers gave the old men a little corn, barley, or money, which they carried in a cloth. The bathers then went to the images, and offered their sacrifices, whilst the old men continued to offer their prayers. Great stones were carved there,[53] on which they poured water, and threw rice, wheat, barley, and other things. There was also a large tank of stone, with steps going down, in which they say their god bathed. The water was stagnant and very foul; it also smelt very badly from the number of flowers they threw into it. The people, however, came in hundreds to wash and pray in this tank, and perform certain ceremonies, believing that by such acts their sins would be forgiven them. Some people also sat near the idols and fanned them.[51] The people were naked, with a cloth about the middle. The women decked their necks, arms, and ears with rings of silver, copper, tin, and ivory. In the cold weather the men wore quilted gowns and caps. If a man or woman were sick and like to die, they were placed before the idols all night, which would either mend or mar them. If the sick were not mended, their friends sat by them and wept, and then carried them to the river and floated them away on rafts of reeds. Marriages were performed in a very simple fashion. A cow and calf were given to a Bráhman. Then the Bráhman walked into the river with the bride and bridegroom. All three took hold of the tail of the cow, and the Bráhman poured water over it. The Bráhman next tied the clothes of the bride and bridegroom together, and required them to walk three times round the cow and calf. The newly-married husband and wife then gave alms to the poor, and money to the idols, and left the cow and calf in the hands of the Bráhman. Finally the pair prostrated themselves upon the earth, and kissed it several times, and then went their way.[55]

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[53] These were the Linga and Yoni. The act of worship is still practised as described by Mr Fitch.

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[51] The following description of Benares was written on the spot a few years ago. The author entered a boat, and slowly ascended the river for two or three miles. "Throughout the whole distance the scene was one continued series of temples, houses, and gháts, not simply following each other, but rising one above the other in endless confusion, tier above tier, sometimes to an imposing height. Wherever there is a single square yard of available space, whether on the edge of the river, or on the tall masonry of solid stone which generally faces the river, or on the terraces and dwelling-places which seem to be constructed on the masonry, there is stuck a temple, with an idol inside, and flowers before the idol. Here shoots up a cone-shaped pagoda, bristling with points or pinnacles of gold. Then the palace of some Raja is seen rising seven or eight stories above the river. Next a wide ghát with a stone bull in front. Whilst here, there, and everywhere, at the foot of great temples, or on terraces and verandahs high up in the air, are smaller pagodas of all sizes, each attended by all the emblems of worship. Some are magnificent ruins which have fallen backwards in the mud; whilst new temples have been built with huge stones, which show by the carvings on them, that they have been appropriated from other and older buildings. At the same time, every place is crowded with worshippers, all of whom are washing, bathing, and praying, until one's mind is confused with the myriads of men, and women, and children of all ages, who are moving about like ants on all sides. For miles, the scene may be described as an assemblage of houses, temples, and bathing-places, thronged with bathers and worshippers, and with thousands and thousands of Bráhmans. Strange to say, that whilst the river itself is regarded as a divinity whose waters will cleanse away all sin, it is so foully polluted that, even in the pleasant cold weather, the senses of sight and smell are perpetually shocked beyond description."

Patna.

From Benares Mr Fitch went to Patna. The whole way was beset with thieves, who were without any fixed abode. Patna was a great long town with large streets. The houses were made of mud and thatched with straw. The women here had rings as before, and so many on their toes that they could not wear shoes. Mr Fitch saw a holy man sitting in the market-place and pretending to be asleep. The people came and touched his feet with their hands, and then kissed their hands. The honest merchant quaintly says,—"The people took him for a great man, but I saw that he was a lazy lubber."

Tanda, Kooch Behar, Húghli, Satgong, Orissa, and the Sunderbunds.

Mr Fitch next went to the city of Tanda. At that time it was a great mart, but the Ganges, which once flowed past it, was already three miles off. From Tanda he went to Cooch, the modern Kooch Behar. Here there was much silk, musk, and cotton cloth. The king was a Hindú. The people were all Hindús. They would kill nothing, and had hospitals for sheep, goats, dogs, cats, birds, and all other living creatures. From Cooch Mr Fitch went to the Portuguese settlement at Húghli. He went through the jungle because the highway was infested by thieves. The country round Gour was almost all wilderness. He saw many buffaloes, swine, and deer. There were also very many tigers. Satgong, about four miles from Húghli, was an emporium. In Bengal there was a great market every day at some part or other, and traders went from place to place in large boats to buy rice and other things. The boats were rowed by twenty or six and twenty oars. They were of great burden, but were not covered. The neighbouring country of Orissa was also a famous seat of trade. Vessels from India and the islands of the East came to Orissa, and brought away large cargoes of rice, cotton cloth, and a cloth made of grass that looked like silk; as well as long pepper, butter, and provisions. The Sunderbunds was occupied by rebels against the emperor Akber. The Mussulman horsemen could not punish them, because they were protected by the numerous creeks and rivers.[56]

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[55] This primitive ceremony has been superseded in the present day by a more tedious ceremonial.

General account of India in the seventeenth century by Faria y Sousa.

Whilst Mr Fitch was traversing Hindustan, the Portuguese had already established their maritime empire in the Eastern seas. Their historian Faria y Sousa, who flourished in the seventeenth century, throws a flood of light upon those parts of the Dek-

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[56] A further account of these rebels will be found in the next chapter, on Portuguese India.

CHAP. VIII.

han and the Peninsula, which have been already described by Marco Polo. The history of Portuguese India will, however, be separately treated in the next chapter. In the present place it will suffice to bring together the observations of the Portuguese historian as regards the people of India in general. "Those heathens," says Faria y Sousa, "have a book they believe in, and esteem as we do the Holy Scripture. It is writ in verse, and is pleasing and ingenious. They believe in one God, the creator of all things, yet allow other uncreated gods; they also believe that there is heaven and hell, and that the souls of such as die in sin go into beasts, and stay there until, being purged, they go to eternal rest. They esteem cows as properest for this transmigration. When a man is dying they bring a cow to him, and put the tail into his hand, that when his soul departs it may be near the door it is to enter at. They allow no free will. Some are of opinion that the souls return from hell into other bodies till they merit heaven; and that there is an indifferent place without reward or punishment for those who live indifferently. The sins they esteem most heinous are murder, theft, drinking wine, and committing adultery. The sin of murder is wiped off with pilgrimages; the sin of theft with alms; the sin of drinking wine with fasting; and the sin of adultery with sacrifices. Sometimes men are sacrificed, but the greatest of all is the sacrifice of cows.[57] Some will lie down under the wheels of the heavy carts of their idols, which crush them to pieces. Others wear irons with spikes that run into them. Others hang themselves on a hook, and there sing verses to their idols. They maintain hospitals, where they look after sick birds and beasts, and send men abroad to bring them in. But they have no compassion for their fellow-men, saying, that their afflictions are sent them for their sins. There are men employed to buy birds or other creatures, only to return them to their liberty. Their chief gods are Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva; and these form a body with three heads, called Mahámúrti, signifying the "three chiefs." Hence it is inferred that the Hindús had some knowledge, though imperfect, of the blessed Trinity. They are much addicted to witchcraft and superstition; and believe there are fourteen worlds, and that this we live in is an image of that in heaven. Their several families touch not one another, nor eat together. Tradesmen cannot marry out of their own trade. The most renowned families among them are the Rajas (i. e. Rajpoots), an ingenious people, who would rather lose their lives than their arms in battle; and the Bráhmans, who contend with the Rajas for precedence. The Chetties are the richest merchants. The Vellalers, or country people, are held in such esteem that kings marry their daughters to Vellalers, saying, "They are the public substance."[58]

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[57] Cows were certainly sacrificed in ancient times, but since the Brahmanical ascendancy the practice has fallen into disuse.

Ecclesiastical organization and missionary operations of the Bráhmans.

In reviewing the state of India during the period, which has here been distinguished as the Brahmanical revival, it is impossible to overlook the ecclesiastical organization of the Bráhmans, by which the varied populations of India have been brought under their influence and authority. In every village, and every important family, a Bráhman priest is generally established as a preceptor or Purohita. Again, every sect or district is under the jurisdiction of a Guru, or spiritual head, who maintains its orthodoxy in matters of caste and religion. The Purohita is supported by the village or family where he has taken up his permanent abode. The Guru is generally engaged in extensive ecclesiastical visitations, during which he levies contributions for the support of himself and his own immediate disciples, and confirms the younger Hindús who have attained a suitable age.[59] The missionary operations of the Bráhmans are indeed worthy of special study. They have been carried on from time immemorial; and the process is still going on amongst hill tribes and other remote populations. A Bráhman makes his appearance in a so-called aboriginal village; and establishes his influence by an affectation of superior sanctity, aided by the fame of his spells, incantations, mystic rites, and astrological predictions. He declares the village idol to be a form of one or other of the great gods or goddesses of the Brahmanical pantheon; and he professes to teach the true forms of worship. He divides the villagers into castes, and introduces caste laws. In this manner the populations of India have been brought under the spiritual domination of the Bráhmans, and the caste system has been introduced into secluded regions, in which it was previously unknown.[60]

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[58] The Vellalers are a high caste in Peninsular India. Faria y Sousa also refers to the division into the two Hands, known as the Right and Left Hands, which is peculiar to the Peninsula.

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[59] The distinction between the Purohita and the Guru has already been laid down. See History, vol. i., Mahá Bhárata, chap. ii. Its importance will abundantly appear hereafter in dealing with the later history.

[60] The territory of Munipore between Cachar and Burma was only converted to Brahmanism during the last century.

CHAPTER IX.

PORTUGUESE INDIA. A. D. 1500—1600.

Portuguese empire in India, its rise and decline. 1500-1600.

During the sixteenth century, whilst the Rajpoots were slowly succumbing to the power of the Moguls, the Portuguese empire in India rose to the zenith of its glory, and then began to decline. The Portuguese were the first European nation that maintained a political power in India since the days of Alexander of Macedon. During the greater part of the fifteenth century they were pushing their way further and further round the Cape, until in 1498 they steered boldly across the Indian Ocean, and anchored off the coast of Malabar. Within a few years more they had established a maritime ascendancy, which extended over the coasts of Africa and Asia from Mosambique to Japan; whilst their famous cities of Goa, Malacca, and Macao, had become emporiums of a trade with India and China, which had previously enriched Venice and Genoa. But within a century the vitality of the Portuguese in India had begun to decay. In 1500 their captains and admirals were eager for gold and glory, but they were also imbued with all the enthusiasm of crusaders. They had not found their way to India, like the early Dutch and English, merely for the purposes of trade. On the contrary, they were animated by devoted loyalty and fervent faith. They were equally zealous for the honour of Portugal and the triumph of the cross of Christ. But in 1600 the old fire was dying out. The soldier had become a mere trader; the noble adventurer was little better than a pirate. Intermarriages of the Portuguese and native converts had deteriorated the race beyond redemption, and religion and morals were painfully orientalized. In the present day the Portuguese in India have utterly degenerated. The once famous names of De Gama, De Castro, and De Sousa, are borne by wretched half-castes, who are blacker than the natives themselves. In Old Goa the stately mansions, streets, and bazaars are entirely deserted; and the churches and monasteries, which are more magnificent than those of any other European city in India, are sinking into ruins amidst a malarious waste and a few poverty-stricken hovels. A Portuguese government is still carried on at New Goa; but the chief memorials of the great maritime power, which once inspired a deep fear throughout the Eastern seas, are to be found in the devastated cities and tiger-haunted jungles of the Sunderbunds.

Importance of the history.

The history of the Portuguese in India is thus invested with an interest and significance which are hardly appreciated by general readers. It records the first conflict between Christianity and Hinduism. It furnishes glimpses of the Indian continent as it was during the transition period which separates the modern India of commerce and civilization from the ancient India of the Bráhman and the Mussulman. It is invested, moreover, with a modern interest, for it solves problems which are still occasionally ventilated from sheer ignorance as to where the solution is to be found. Above all, it throws a broad light upon a phase of the world's history, which is of profound importance; namely, that spirit of revolt which is ever seething below the surface of society like the hidden fires of a volcano. In Portuguese India this revolt found expression in a hateful piracy, which devastated the Sunderbunds, and spread unutterable terror over lower Bengal, until it was suppressed and punished by the strong arm of the emperor Aurangzíb.

First arrival of Vasco de Gama, 1498.

The first Portuguese who succeeded in reaching the shores of India arrived in three ships commanded by Vasco de Gama. Twelve months previously, on Saturday, the 8th of July, 1497, they had left Lisbon like an army of martyrs. Every man had gone to confession and received absolution. The monks of Our Lady of Bethlehem had walked to the ships in solemn procession, and offered up prayers for the success of the expedition, which had been echoed by the whole population of Lisbon. The voyage which followed proved to be one of extreme peril. The adventurers had to encounter terrible storms in unknown seas, and treacherous enemies on unknown shores; and endured privations which culminated in a new and dangerous disease, subsequently known as scurvy. But now the land of promise lay before them; the land of gold and jewels, pearls and spices. In the joy and exultation of their hearts they held a solemn thanksgiving to Heaven, for having at last conducted them to the realms of gold, which Portugal had for generations sought to discover.

The great peninsula of India was at that period passing through one of those convulsive throes to

Political state of India.

which it has been subject from the very dawn of history. The Moguls had not as yet invaded India, it was not until 1526 that Baber founded his empire at Delhi and Agra. Meantime northern India, or Hindustan proper, had been parcelled out amongst a number of Afghan Mussulman chiefs; excepting to the south and west where the Rajpoots still maintained an independent dominion. The remainder of India, known as the Dekhan and the Peninsula, was about equally divided between Mussulmans and Hindús. The Dekhan was occupied by a powerful Mussulman dynasty known as the Brahmany Sultans. Southward of the Dekhan, the whole Peninsula, corresponding to the present Madras presidency, and including Mysore, was formed into the Hindú kingdom of Narsinga, the last which deserved the name of empire. When the Portuguese anchored off Malabar the Mussulmans of the Dekhan and Hindús of Narsinga were at peace. After a series of bloody wars which extended over a century, the Mussulmans of the Dekhan had at last compelled the Hindú Rais of the Peninsula to pay tribute; and the work of devastation, slaughter, and plunder was thus brought to a close.

Coast of Malabar.

The Portuguese, however, could know but little of these great powers. Before them was a long line of coast territory, with a mountain-wall in the background, formed by the chain of mountains known as the western Ghauts, but which might be more appropriately termed the Indian Apennines. This mountain-wall seemed to shut out alike the Mussulmans of the Dekhan and the Hindús of the south, to whom, however, the Rajas of the coast owed a nominal allegiance. The whole line of sea-board is called by the general name of Malabar; a name which should properly be applied only to the southern end between Cananore and Comorin.

Social and religious status of the Malabar people.

The territory of Malabar, thus limited, is perhaps one of the most curious regions in all India. The higher class natives are a relic of primitive civilization when the marriage tie was unknown or disregarded. Being walled off as it were from the more orthodox Hindú empire of Narsinga, they obstinately adhered to their depraved mode of living, although they accepted the form of religion which was taught by the Bráhmans. Their original worship was that indescribable idolatry of sex, which was associated with the worship of Siva; but they had subsequently professed the worship of Vishnu, under his great incarnations of Ráma and Krishna, which was the national religion of the Rais of Narsinga. They also propitiated a demon-goddess, named Mari or Mariamma, who was supposed to be the originator and distributer of all diseases. They were divided into a number of petty kingdoms, each of which was governed by a Raja; but these Rajas acknowledged the authority of a suzerain, who reigned at the ancient sea-port of Calicut, under the title of Zamorin or emperor.

Spice trade of the ports of Malabar.

From time immemorial the sea-ports of Malabar, especially Calicut, had been famous for their trade in spices, pepper, ginger, and other Indian commodities. The Rajas of the several kingdoms were deeply interested in this trade, for they levied a tax on every sale, and often supplied the cargoes. The principal traders, however, were Mussulmans from Arabia and Egypt, who went by the name of Moors. These men carried away not only rich cargoes to the Red Sea, but shiploads of pilgrims going to Mecca. They landed their pilgrims at Jedda, and their goods at Suez. The goods were then carried through Egypt on the backs of camels to the city of Alexandria, where they were again shipped in the vessels of Venetian and Genoese merchants, and conveyed to the different ports in the Mediterranean.

Portuguese fleet anchors at Calicut.

The three Portuguese vessels under Vasco de Gama anchored off Calicut on the 20th of May, 1498; and their arrival must have caused no little excitement at the court of the Zamorin, as well as in the city bazaars. Vasco de Gama opened up communications with the shore through his pilot, and announced himself as ambassador from the sovereign of Portugal, and bearer of a letter to the Zamorin from king Emanuel. The Zamorin naturally expressed a wish to see the strangers; and the Portuguese admiral, accompanied by twelve of his officers, entered a boat, and landed for the first time on the shores of India.

Visit of the Portuguese at the pagoda of Mariamma.

The reception of Vasco de Gama was precisely what might have been expected from a Hindú Raja of the period, inflated with pride and arrogance, but having a special regard to his own interests. No sooner had Don Vasco landed, than he was offered a palanquin, and carried through the sun to a neighbouring pagoda. The building with its surroundings is described as equal to the greatest of the Portuguese monasteries. On the top of the gateway were five bells, and opposite to it was a tall pillar of brass, with a cock on the summit. Within the gate Vasco de Gama was received by four Malabar Bráhmans, who were only half clothed, precisely as they would appear in the present day.

They wore nothing above their waist but the Brahmanical thread; and only a white cotton cloth from their waist downwards. The Bráhmans sprinkled the Portuguese strangers with scented water, and presented them with powdered sandal-wood, according to ancient custom. About the walls of the pagoda were painted several horrible figures of monsters and wild beasts. In the middle was a round chapel with brass gates; and within the chapel was the statue of a woman enshrouded with darkness. The Portuguese gazed eagerly around, and presently they asked whom the statue represented. The Malabars cried out with joyful reverence, "Mari," "Mari;" and at once prostrated themselves on the ground. The Portuguese immediately took it for granted that the demon-goddess was the Virgin Mary, and prostrated themselves in like manner; but in a few moments they discovered their folly, and could only laugh at the idea of having been induced to worship a demon.

Reception of Vasco de Gama by the Zamorin.

From the pagoda Don Vasco and his Portuguese officers were carried to the palace of the Zamorin; it was built of mud, but pleasantly situated amidst trees and gardens. The strangers were ushered in with all the ceremonial that Asiatic princes assume on such occasions. The chief Bráhman received them at the gate, and then led Don Vasco into the audience-chamber. Here the Zamorin was seated in state on an elevated couch of silk which was ascended by steps. A grave official stood by his side holding a gold plate of betel. The Hindú prince was arrayed in white cotton flowered with gold. He wore rich jewels in his ears; bracelets and bangles on his legs and arms; and on his head was a diadem of pearls. He received Don Vasco with dignified hauteur, whilst the noble Portuguese was directed to sit on one of the steps of the throne. The letter from King Emanuel was then received, and Don Vasco was promised a speedy answer.

Intrigues of the Mussulman merchants at Calicut.

But intrigues were already on foot against the strangers. The Mussulman merchants naturally regarded the Portuguese as Christian dogs, and were extremely indignant that such men should have appeared in India as commercial rivals. They bribed the officials of the Zamorin, and whispered that the strangers were not in any way envoys from the king of Portugal; that the presents which had been brought were too poor for such a king to have sent, or for the Zamorin to receive; that the would-be ambassadors were in reality dangerous pirates, who had already committed several outrages on the coast of Africa, and probably intended to work more mischief in India. Don Vasco, who had been made over to the care of one of these officials, soon found that he was virtually a prisoner. He was perpetually urged to bring his ships nearer to the shore; and he suspected or discovered that the Mussulmans only wanted to burn them. At length he assumed a bold tone, and fairly frightened the Zamorin. He was now permitted to return to his ship and land a portion of his cargo; and a house was made over to him, and placed in the charge of a Portuguese factor.

Reprisals of Vasco de Gama: his return to Portugal.

But the Mussulmans did not rest a moment from their intrigues. The factor could neither buy nor sell a single article, and soon found that he also was a prisoner. Don Vasco seized some fishermen by way of reprisals, and thus procured the release of the factor. Unfortunately he did not release all the fishermen, but kept some on board to carry to Portugal. This proceeding confirmed the suspicion that he was a slave-hunting pirate, and excited such alarm along the coast that vessels began to assemble from all the neighbouring ports for his destruction. Accordingly he once more steered out into the Indian Ocean, and returned to Portugal by the way he came. In 1499 he entered the river Tagus after an absence of two years; but of one hundred and sixty men who had accompanied him from Lisbon, only fifty-five returned. He had lost two-thirds of his force by scurvy, privation, and disastrous encounters. But the survivors were the heroes of the day. Public thanksgivings were offered up in all the churches and cathedrals, and the whole nation was filled with joy and exultation. Spain had discovered America, but Portugal had found her way to the riches of the Indies.[1]

Second Portuguese fleet, under Cabral.

King Emanuel was now convinced that force was necessary for the establishment of a trade in India. A fleet of thirteen ships was manned with twelve hundred men, and sent to India under Alvarez Cabral. Of this fleet more than half were foundered on the voyage, and only six ships anchored at Calicut. The fishermen brought away on the previous voyage were soon landed and left to tell their own story. Negotiations were opened with the Zamorin. Six Bráhman ministers of state were sent on board the ships as hostages; whilst Cabral and his officers went on shore and eventually concluded a treaty. A house in Calicut was again made over to the Portuguese for the purposes of trade; and a Portuguese factor with sixty picked men were sent to transact business, and protect the premises.

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[1] Portuguese Asia by Faria y Sousa, translated by Stevens. London, 1695.

Fresh intrigues and reprisals.

But the old intriguing spirit of the Mussulman traders was as active as ever. The Portuguese could purchase only very slowly and at very advanced rates; whilst they saw the Moors loading their own vessels rapidly. At last Cabral was so exasperated that he seized one of the Mussulman ships, and transferred the cargo to his own vessel. The cry at once spread throughout the city that the Portuguese were pirates. The military class of Hindús, who are called Nairs in Malabar, were roused to indignation. An excited mob gathered round the factory, and assailed the inmates with darts and javelins. The Portuguese made an obstinate defence, but were overwhelmed by numbers. At last a portion of the wall was broken down, and the Nairs rushed in. Fifty Portuguese were slaughtered on the spot, but the remainder escaped to the shore and swam to their ships. Cabral was so maddened at the news, and especially at hearing that the Zamorin had shared in the plunder of the factory, that he burned fifteen ships that were lying in the harbour, and cannonaded the town for two days, during which, it is said, five hundred people were killed.

Feudatory princes join the Portuguese against the Zamorin.

This energetic proceeding led to other intrigues of a character which is singularly oriental. The princes of Malabar had long been jealous of the authority of the Zamorin; and when they saw that the Portuguese had cannonaded his port, they manifested an anxiety to cultivate the friendship of such powerful strangers. This line of action is well deserving of notice. Taxiles and Porus the younger pursued precisely the same policy when Alexander of Macedon invaded the Punjab. On the approach of an invader by sea or land, the princes of India have always waited events. If the invader is victorious, they wait until his superiority is fully established; and when they find that he is really the stronger, they are ready to ally with him against their own suzerain.[2] Cabral, like Alexander, was equal to the occasion. He opened up a communication through a somewhat remarkable personage known as a Yogi. These Yogis have already been described as a class of religious mendicants, only known to India, who ponder over the secrets of death and reproduction until they become half crazed, and fancy that they have delivered their souls from the bondage of the flesh, and become deities. However, through this Yogi, Cabral obtained cargoes both at Cochin and Cananore, and then returned to Lisbon. Strange to say this Yogi was ultimately converted to Christianity, and duly baptized.[3]

Piratical crusade against the Mussulmans.

In 1502 another armament appeared in the Eastern seas under the command of Vasco de Gama, the discoverer of India. Hostilities had now taken the form of a piratical crusade against every Mussulman ship the Portuguese could find. The cruelties perpetrated were horrible. One ship contained two hundred and sixty pilgrims, who were going to Mecca, of whom fifty were women and children. Twenty children were saved and baptized, but the remainder were thrust down into the hold without mercy, and the ship was then scuttled and set on fire. It would be wearisome to describe other captures, which were mostly of the same stamp. It will suffice to say that the Portuguese were permitted to erect a fort and church at Cochin, and made it their head-quarters. Henceforth the Raja of Cochin proved a faithful ally to the king of Portugal. He paid no tribute, but declared himself a subject of Portugal. In 1503 he was assailed by the Zamorin and a powerful army of confederates; but he resolutely refused to surrender the Portuguese who had taken refuge in his dominions, and the Zamorin was ultimately compelled to retire. In return for this good service, he received a crown of gold from king Emanuel, and a yearly present of a golden cup and a large golden coin from Portugal.[4]

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[2] In the present day the paramount power of the British government is on a firmer footing than that of any previous suzerain in India. Some touching proofs of genuine loyalty were exhibited on many trying occasions during the mutinies of 1857.

[3] Faria y Sousa, vol. i., page 59.

The Syrian Christians at Cranganore.

Whilst staying at Cochin, Don Vasco received ambassadors from a colony of Syrian Christians, who had been settled for centuries in the city and kingdom of Cranganore, on the Malabar coast not far from Cochin. The embassy was in every respect a strange one. The men told Don Vasco that there were thirty thousand Christians in the colony; that Saint Thomas the apostle had preached to their forefathers; that they were subject to the Patriarch of Armenia; that they were harassed by the pagans around them; that they knew the Viceroy to be an officer of the most Catholic king in Europe; and they were desirous of making their submission to him. Accordingly they delivered to Don Vasco a so-called rod of justice. This rod was of a red colour, and about the length of a sceptre. It was tipped with silver at each end, and had three bells on the top.[5]

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[4] Faria y Sousa, vol. i., page 67; vol. ii., page 226.

[5] Ibid., vol. i., page 67. The subsequent efforts of the Portuguese priests to

Egyptian armada for the expulsion of the Portuguese.

Shortly after these events, a new and unexpected enemy appeared upon the scene. This was the Sultan of Egypt, better known to our forefathers as the Soldan of Cairo. This Saracen monarch was naturally furious at the many captures of Mecca ships, and the heavy loss of trade, which no longer passed through Egypt, but went round the Cape. In the first outburst of his wrath he swore by the Prophet that he would destroy all the holy places at Jerusalem, unless the Portuguese at once abandoned the Indian seas. The Pope was so alarmed that he entreated king Emanuel to accede to the wishes of the Saracen. Nothing, however, was done. Meantime the Venetians were as great losers as the Sultan of Egypt, and actually furnished the infidel with the timber to build a fleet at Suez for the extirpation of the Portuguese. News in those days must have travelled but slowly, but native vessels in large numbers were always plying from port to port. In this way probably the Portuguese Viceroy discovered that an Egyptian fleet was actually on its way to the Indian seas, and that it was expected to co-operate with the Mussulman Sultan of Guzerat for the destruction of the Portuguese.[6]

Fears of a Mussulman confederacy generally groundless.

The Viceroy might well have been alarmed. The Turks had long been the terror of Europe; and the appearance of an Egyptian fleet in the Eastern seas might have been a signal for the Mussulman powers of Guzerat and the Dekhan to unite their forces for the expulsion of the Christian

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cure these simple-minded Christians of schism, forms a curious chapter in ecclesiastical history.

[6] Faria y Sousa, vol. i., page 82 *et seq.* The subsidy to the Sultan was even recommended in the Venetian senate. See letter of L. da Porto, quoted by Hallam, Literature of Europe, vol. iii., page 165.

strangers, who were ruining their trade. But such confederations of Asiatic sovereigns are rarely if ever possible. They are broken up as soon as formed by treachery, or suspicion of treachery. No one will trust his neighbour, but will rather seek to hang back and wait events, in order that he may join the victor in the end. Indeed no tie, political or religious, can be trusted to keep Asiatic rulers together, unless it is held fast by the strong arm of a paramount power.

Trimming of the Mussulman governor of Diu: destruction of the Egyptian armada.

The Egyptian fleet duly arrived in the Indian Ocean, and anchored at the port of Diu, which is a little island off the southern coast of Guzerat. The Mussulman governor of Diu did then precisely what a similar ruler would do now; he waited for events. A Portuguese fleet came up, and an engagement ensued. The Egyptians were getting a little the worst of it, when the governor sent out a reinforcement of small vessels to help them. The Egyptians gained the victory, and took several Portuguese prisoners; and the Viceroy's own son was slain in the action. The governor then took charge of the Portuguese prisoners in behalf of the Egyptians; and tried to keep terms with the Portuguese by sending a letter of condolence to the Viceroy. The Portuguese, however, soon retrieved their loss. The Viceroy sailed with a large fleet to Diu, and fell upon the Egyptians, and utterly defeated them, and plundered and destroyed their shipping. The governor waited this time until the battle was won, and then hastened to restore the prisoners, and court the friendship of the Portuguese.

The ablest of all the Viceroys of Portuguese India was Alfonso de Albuquerque, who governed it

Maritime empire founded by Albuquerque at Goa and Malacca.

from 1509 to 1515. He made some mistakes, and committed some barbarous actions, but these should be justly charged to the bigoted fanaticism of the age. In other respects he was a military statesman of sound judgment. He saw that the interests of Portugal demanded that she should have two capitals of her own; one for the Indian peninsula, and one for the Malay peninsula, including Siam and Burma. For this purpose he selected two admirable sites, Goa and Malacca. The island of Goa seems formed by nature to be a harbour of refuge for a maritime power, that desires to be shut off from the main. Its western shore was open to the Indian Ocean; whilst the remaining portion was cut off from the continent by an arm of the sea. Again, both the island and the coast were protected against a hostile attack from the interior, by the almost impenetrable jungles of the Konkan. The island had been a nest of pirates from the days of Pliny; but about forty years before the arrival of Albuquerque the Sultan of Bijapore had cut a way through the jungle, and driven out the pirates, on account of certain outrages which had been committed on Mecca pilgrim ships, and then established a colony of Mussulman traders in their room. Malacca was also favourably situated on the Malay peninsula opposite Sumatra. Both places were captured by Albuquerque without any pretext whatever, excepting that the Christians of Portugal were at war against the infidel followers of the Prophet.

Death and character of Albuquerque.

Albuquerque was the first Portuguese governor who fairly earned the respect of the great Mussulman and Hindú powers; but he could not throw off that blind crusading enmity against Mussulmans, which is only beginning to pass away from the mind of Christendom. He died at the bar of Goa on the 16th of December, 1515, at the age of sixty-three. He was buried at Goa in a chapel which he had himself built at the gate of the city; but in after-years his bones were carried to Lisbon, and interred in the church of Our Lady of Grace. He was the last of the real Portuguese gentlemen; the true soldier of the old aristocracy, who cared not to engage in trade or to amass riches, but sought only for honour and glory.[7]

Ascendancy of the Mussulmans of the Dekhan, 1350—1500.

The immediate successors of Albuquerque achieved nothing deserving of special attention. Meantime great events were coming to pass on the other side of the western Ghauts. The political status of India, during the century and a half which preceded the arrival of the Portuguese in India, namely, from 1350 to 1500, has already been briefly indicated. Hindustan, with the exception of Rajpootana, was distributed amongst a number of Mussulman chieftains, whose normal state was that of intermittent war. The Dekhan was occupied by the great Mussulman empire of the so-called Brahmany Sultans. The Peninsula was occupied by the Canarese empire of Narsinga or Vijayanagar, which had established its suzerainty over the whole of India southward of the Krishna river from the coast of Malabar to that of Coromandel.[8] The Brahmany Mussulmans of the Dekhan were completely cut off from the Mussulman powers of Hindustan, by the Rajpoot kingdoms of Meywar, Marwar, and Jeypore, and the mountain-wall of the Vindhya range; whilst further eastward the great jungle of Gondwana interposed an almost impenetrable barrier. The result was that the Mussulman Sultans of the Dekhan were enabled to concentrate their forces against the Hindú sovereigns of Narsinga, and had ultimately established their supremacy and compelled the Hindú Rajas to pay yearly tribute.

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[7] Faria y Sousa, vol. i., page 207.

[8] The empire of Narsinga included the three ancient kingdoms of Chola, Chera, and Pandya. It corresponded to the region known in the last century as the two Carnatics, namely, Balaghaut, or the Carnatic above the Ghauts, and Paíynghaut, or the Carnatic below the Ghauts. The history of Peninsula-India will be brought under review hereafter.

Ascendancy of the Hindús of the Peninsula, 1521–1565.

During the latter part of the fifteenth century, or about the time that the Portuguese arrived in India, the empire of the Brahmany Mussulmans became dismembered into five separate kingdoms, namely, Ahmednagar and Berar on the north; Bíjápúr and Golcónda on the south; and the petty state of Bíder in the centre. This dismemberment proved fatal to the independence of these sovereignties. They were no longer consolidated into one empire, which could concentrate the whole of its forces against the Hindús of Narsinga. The southern states of Bíjápúr and Golcónda were left to bear the brunt of the struggle, whilst the three states to the northward stood aloof, and made war upon each other, after the blind fashion of Asiatic sovereigns. In a word, the balance of power was upset between the Mussulmans of the Dekhan and the Hindús of the Peninsula. It was not, however, until 1524 that Krishna Rai, the powerful sovereign of Narsinga, realized the fact that his old enemy was divided and disabled, and marched an immense force of men and elephants into the Dekhan. For the first time in their history the Hindú got the upper hand of the Mussulmans. Krishna Rai succeeded in establishing an ascendancy, which lasted for more than forty years. It is characteristic of the times that Portuguese mercenaries were fighting on either side.

Relations between the Portuguese and native powers.

For some years after the death of Albuquerque, the annals of the Portuguese are chiefly filled with petty wars on account of their forts. Wherever they established a depôt they found it necessary to build a fort; and they generally succeeded in obtaining permission by helping the prince of the country against his neighbours. When, however, this help was no longer required, every prince in turn tried to expel the Portuguese either by force or treachery; and by way of reprisals, the Portuguese formed expeditions for scouring the coasts, and burning, pillaging, and devastating the country.

Description of Guzerat.

By this time the Portuguese must have acquired a considerable knowledge of Western India. With the Peninsula of Guzerat they were specially acquainted. It had been formed into a Mussulman kingdom, but was the theatre of frequent wars between the Mussulmans and the Rajpoots. The country was most fertile and flourishing. It abounded in elephants, cattle, fruit, and all kinds of provisions; and it contained large stocks of silks, cottons, gems, and other commodities. The chief city was Cambay, which sometimes gave its name to the entire kingdom. This city was called the Indian Cairo. The houses were square buildings of stone and brick, with flat roofs. They had goodly gardens with pomegranates, citrons, melons, and figs; as well as various springs of fresh water. The country was all plain, so that the people generally travelled in waggons, like those of Flanders. The waggons, however, were lighter; and the oxen that drew them were smaller than those of Spain. The population consisted of Banians, Rajpoots, and Mussulmans. The Banians would eat nothing that had life. Their priests were called Verteas, and wore white clothes which they never took off until worn to rags. These Verteas lived upon charity, and kept nothing until the next day.[9] They placed their greatest hope of salvation in killing no creature. They would not use a lamp at night, lest a moth or butterfly should die by it. They always carried a broom wherewith to sweep the ground they were to tread, lest they should step on any worm or insect. They had the most superstitious regard for signs and omens of every kind. The Rajpoots were good soldiers, and formerly ruled the kingdom.[10] The Mussulmans were called Lauteas. The common people were very ingenious in the mechanical arts, and wrought many delightful things in silk, gold, ivory, mother of pearl, tortoise-shell, crystal, ebony, and other similar materials. They not only refrained from killing any living creature, but they would ransom venomous things, such as snakes, which others were about to kill.[11]

Region between Guzerat and Malabar.

As regards the region between Guzerat and Malabar, the Portuguese were familiar with the coast, but had little or no knowledge of the interior.

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[9] The Verteas bore a strong resemblance to the Jains already described. See *ante*, page 361.

[10] The Portuguese historian adds that the Rajpoots acknowledged one God and three persons, and worshipped the blessed Virgin; a doctrine preserved from the days of the Apostles. This was a frequent delusion of Christian travellers in former times. The three principal deities of the later Hindús were Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva; and as each one was identified with the supreme spirit, so they were often severally worshipped as representatives of the supreme spirit.

[11] Faria y Sousa, vol. i., page 361. Compare also Purchas's Pilgrimage, chap. ix.

Nominally the region formed part of the Mussulman kingdoms of Kandeish, Ahmednagar, and Bíjápúr; but the seas were infested by pirates, and the trade must have been very inferior to that of Malabar. The Portuguese, however, had established forts at Duman and Chaul, and were well acquainted with the islands of Bombay, Salsette, and Elephanta.

Description of Malabar: political organization.

The Portuguese were best acquainted with Malabar; the long strip of coast territory which lies between the sea and the mountain wall of the Western Ghauts. It extends from Cananore to Comorin, and is at present known as Malabar and Travancore. The whole region is distributed by nature into isolated tracts, which are separated from each other by rivers, mountains, and dense jungles. These tracts were formed into petty kingdoms, which could not by reason of the physical barriers be formed into a single empire. They all acknowledged the nominal suzerainty of the Zamorin of Calicut; but, like the Raja of Cochin, they threw it off as occasions arose. In the seventeenth century there were two traditions extant as regards the origin of the Zamorin. According to one story, the kings of this line were all Bráhmans, and esteemed for piety and learning. They believed in the transmigration of souls, and avoided the slaughter of animals. About six centuries before the arrival of the Portuguese in India [i. e. about A.D. 900], there was a king in Malabar, who was so powerful that the people dated their era from his reign. He was converted to Islam by some Mussulman traders at his ports, and accordingly gave them permission to build Calicut. When he was growing old he resolved on going on a pilgrimage to Mecca; and accordingly divided his authority between two of his heirs. He appointed the chief to the kingdom of Coulam (Travancore);[12] where he fixed the head See of the religion of the Bráhmans, and called him "Cobritim," which is the same as high priest. To his nephew he gave Calicut, with all the temporal dominion, and called him Zamorin. Subsequently the spiritual dignity had been transferred from Coulam (Quilon) to Cochin. The temporal sovereignty had remained at Calicut. The king of Malabar then proceeded to Mecca, but was drowned on the voyage.[13] According to another tradition there were originally twenty kings of Malabar;[14] but so many differences arose between these petty sovereigns, that they determined to elect an arbitrator. The office was not to be hereditary but elective; and it was to be held by a prince who was not likely to become too powerful. Accordingly they appointed Cheraman Perumal, literally "a governor from Chera," and fixed his residence at Calicut.[15] Such, however, was the great concourse of merchants from all parts to that city, that it grew into a metropolis of an empire, notwithstanding the care which had been taken to prevent it.[16]

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[12] Travancore is the modern name of the kingdom. Faria y Sousa calls it Coulam; it should be Kollam. The city of Kollam, which anciently gave its name to the kingdom, is marked Quilon on modern maps. It is situated on the coast, to the northward of Trevandrum, which is the present capital of Travancore.

[13] Faria y Sousa, vol. i., pages 100,101. The reference to an era of a king of Malabar, associated with Quilon (anciently Kollam), is of some importance. It is still known as the Kollam era, and is also called the "Parasuráma-Sacam," or "Era of Parasu-Ráma," which commences A.D. 825. (See Brown's Carnatic Chronology, page 34.) This seems to furnish a clue to the age of Parasu-Ráma. Possibly the era of Parasu-Ráma corresponds to the era of Rama's conquest of Rávana and the Rákshasas. The story of the Mecca pilgrimage is doubtless a pious invention of the Mussulmans.

[14] The names of these little kingdoms are given by Faria y Sousa. The author is satisfied that a Survey officer of local experience would succeed in drawing up an approximate map of the different sovereignties. They comprise Cananore, Tanore, Moringue, Cranganore, Parum, Mungate, Repelim, Cochin, Diamper, Pimienta, Tarungule, Maturte, Porca (? Chambagacherry), Marta, Pitimene, Calo Coulam (? Kayencoilam), Coulam (Quilon), Changernate, Gundra, and Travancore.

[15] Chera was an ancient kingdom in the Western Peninsula, extending from

Social usages of the Malabar people.

The social customs of the Malabar people were very peculiar, and reveal a state of society which can scarcely be realized. The priests were regarded

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the sea-coast into the interior, where its frontiers conterminated with those of the ancient kingdom of Pandya or Madura. It is mentioned by Ptolemy. It included Malabar, Travancore, and part of Coimbatore.

According to tradition Cheraman Perumal was only permitted to reign twelve years, when he was expected to commit suicide, and make over his kingdom to his successor. (Day's Land of the Permauls, i. e. Cochin, chap. ii. Madras, 1863.) This strange custom seems to have died out of Malabar long before the arrival of the Portuguese, but old travellers refer to its existence in the territories of the king of Travancore. It is thus described in Purchas's Pilgrimage :—

"The king of Travancore's dominion stretcheth beyond Cape Comorin, (where Malabar endeth) on the east side four score and ten miles as farre as Cael [i. e. Kayal]: which divers great lords hold under him. Among the rest is the Signiory of Quilacare. In the city of Quilacare is an idol of high account, to which they solemnize a feast every twelfth year. The temple sacred to this idol hath exceeding great revenue. The king (for so he is called) at this feast erecteth a scaffold covered with silk; and having washed himself with great solemnity, he prayeth before this idol: and then ascendeth the scaffold, and there in the presence of all the people cutteth off his nose, and after that his ears, lips, and other parts, which he casts towards the idol; and at last he cuts his throat, making a butcherly sacrifice of himself to his idol. He that is to be his successor, must be present hereat; for he must undergo the same martyrdom when his twelve years Jubilee is come."

[16] Faria y Sousa, vol. ii., page 244. The following particulars are added by the Portuguese historian, and may be accepted as an illustration of the confusion of ideas respecting Christianity, which prevailed in the seventeenth century. "This dignity of emperor, which is signified by the word Zamorin, continued till the year of grace 347, according to the records of Calicut; but till 588, according to the records of Cochin. Wheresoever it was Chera Perumal then reigned, who tired with the cares of a crown, and having some knowledge of the Evangelical doctrine, as being a great favourer of the Christians of St Thomas, inhabiting at Cranganore, he resolved to end his days at Meliapore, serving in that church. By consent of all his princes, he resigned the crown to Manuchem Herari, his page; esteemed worthy and able to govern that empire. Perumal died at Meliapore; and it is thought one of those bodies found with the apostle was his."

The story of the discovery of the remains of St Thomas, will be related hereafter. The dates furnished by the Portuguese are wholly unreliable; otherwise they would prove the impossibility of the Perumal in question being a contemporary of the apostle. In all probability the Perumal turned a Buddhist monk in his old age. The Mussulmans said that he embraced Islam.

as Bráhmans, and were called Bráhmans; but their proper name was Nambúries. The military class were in like manner treated as Kshatriyas; but in reality they were a tribe of Súdras, and went by the name of Nairs. These Nairs were trained from their early childhood in the use of arms, and formed the militia of the country; but they were not regarded as true soldiers, until they had undergone a ceremony corresponding to that of being knighted by the king. From that time they seem to have formed a military nobility, and were never to be seen without their sword and buckler. They were not married, but lived so indiscriminately with Nair women, that no man was supposed to know his own children; and the succession, whether to the crown, or to landed property, went to the son of a sister as the nearest known kinsman. The Nambúries and the Nairs were the two highest classes. All others were regarded as vastly inferior; and some were so impure, that they might be slain if they approached too nearly.[17]

Sacrifices.

The kings and nobles of Malabar performed daily prayers and sacrifices in honour of their gods. The offerings consisted of rice, cocoa-nut, and butter; and were burnt before the golden idols for the sake of obtaining riches and prosperity for themselves, and revenge and destruction upon their enemies. Many had familiar spirits in their houses, whom they sought to propitiate. Witches were not punished in Malabar, but were consulted by the kings. In sickness the people applied to wizards, rather than to doctors. They considered that disease was produced by a demon; and that the wizard could induce the demon to go away. They believed that small-pox could be cured by an offering to the goddess Bhadrá Kalí, who was supposed to cause it. They also believed that gout was produced by five she-devils like sows; and they offered food fit for swine to these demons, in order that they might transfer the disease to the sick man's enemies.[18]

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[17] Faria y Sousa, vol. ii., page 225. Purchas's Pilgrimage.

Religious bathings.

The people bathed often, not so much to cleanse the body as the soul; inasmuch as they purged themselves from venial sins by putting their heads under water. This they did after being touched by a plebeian; after touching a dead body; after touching meat with the right hand; after touching those so touched, or their houses or wells; after touching another with the right hand whilst eating; or touching a drop of water which had been disturbed by one of low caste. But there were mortal sins that could not be so washed away. It was a mortal sin to use a pot which had been touched by men who were defiled; to eat rice before the body had been purified; to eat rice which had been boiled by a person of low caste; to have intercourse with women of low caste; to eat rice which had fallen from another man's plate.[19]

Their bathing was peculiar, being connected with the worship of the Trimúrti.[20] They believed that the stone of the tank was the god Brahma; that the lips of it were Vishnu; that altogether it was Siva. In the water they wrote the three letters A U M with one finger,[21] and threw water over it with three, believing that the three gods bathed

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[18] Faria y Sousa, vol. ii., page 398.

[19] Ibid., page 399.

[20] See *ante*, page 383.

[21] Compare History, vol. ii., part v., Brahmanic Period.

CHAPTER IX.

there. They then dipped their heads and threw water towards the eight parts of the world, as offerings to the eight guardian deities of the universe. They called upon the goddess Sri, or good fortune,[22] and washed their faces three times. They next offered water to the sun, and washed their hands and feet. They then touched every part of the body in order to sanctify it. They held their hands as if they gave something to two spirits who they said attended on every man; one on his right hand to record his good works, and the other on his left hand to record his evil works. The last ceremony of all was to rub the forehead, shoulders, and breast, with white ashes taken up with the two fingers and thumb of the right hand, in honour of the three gods,—Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva.[23]

The bathing which was performed in the sea was a very solemn rite. They first made offerings of Tulasi flowers, which are sacred to Vishnu; and then prostrated themselves three times on the ground in reverence to the supreme deity, the sun, and the sea. They bathed at the new moon, and when the new moon fell on a Wednesday, the pilgrims came on foot from all parts of India, and of all ages, sexes, and conditions. The river Ganges was held in great veneration for this religious bathing. Ashes of cow-dung was their chief purgation. They powdered their breasts and foreheads with it, and accounted it a sign of holiness. The Yogis carried it about in purses, in order to reward those who gave them alms.[24]

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[22] Sri was a form of Lakshmí. See *ante*, page 323.

[23] Faria y Sousa, vol. ii., pages 400, 401.

[24] Ibid., page 402.

Shrine of St Thomas.

The Portuguese account of the shrine of St Thomas forms an interesting supplement to the information supplied by Marco Polo. They discovered the remains of a chapel, and collected many pious legends; one of which described how St Thomas was martyred by a Bráhman whilst praying in a cave.[25] The fact, however, which is stated by Marco Polo, that Mussulmans as well as Christians went on pilgrimage to this shrine, would seem to imply that the legend was not generally believed; and there is reason to suspect that St Thomas was a Buddhist Sráman, who had perished in the age of Brahmanical persecution.

Portuguese attempt to trade with Bengal, 1538: political condition of Bengal.

To return, however, to the history of Goa. About the year 1538 the Viceroy contemplated opening up a direct trade with the distant kingdom of Bengal. He therefore sent a mission to Chittagong, a border sea-port between Bengal and Arakan, with the view of obtaining permission to build a fort there. At this period the government of Bengal was of the worst possible form. A series of low-born adventurers by turns murdered the reigning Sultan, and obtained the kingdom; and thus Sultan after Sultan cut his way to the throne by treachery and assassination, and after a brief career of sensual indulgences, was doomed to meet with the same violent end as his predecessor. Sometimes the Sultan was an Afghan, sometimes an Arab, and sometimes a black Abyssinian slave; yet the effeminate and timid Bengalees never tried to throw off his hateful yoke, but were ready to obey any one who could hold the throne for three days. When the Portuguese mission reached Chittagong, the reigning Sultan was an Arab, who took up his residence in the once famous metropolis of Gour. At that time this city was celebrated for its broad streets, long avenues of trees, an over-crowded population, and the elaborate and yet minute style of its architectural ornamentation; but in the present day it is a mere collection of heaps of ruins, overgrown with jungle, and haunted by wild beasts and noxious reptiles. Here the Sultan indulged in oriental gratifications, but was a prey to constant suspicions and terrors. When the Portuguese messengers arrived with presents, he threw them into prison, and ordered all the members of the mission at Chittagong to be arrested in like manner and sent to Gour. The barbarous command was obeyed; but another revolution procured the release of the Portuguese. Shere Khan, the Afghan, suddenly fell upon Gour. The Arab Sultan fled from the city, but was soon killed and forgotten. The conquering Moguls made their way down Hindustan, and were approaching Bengal, when Shere Khan utterly defeated them, and drove their emperor Humáyun into exile in Persia. Shere Khan and his son after him then ruled over all northern India from the Indús to the Bay of Bengal for a period of thirteen years.[26]

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[25] Faria y Sousa, vol. i., pages 269, 271; vol. ii., pages 224—231. The mount where St Thomas was buried is near Madras, and is the head-quarters of the Madras artillery. The modern town of St Thomé is on the coast, about three miles to the south of Madras. Its native name is Meliapore, or "the city of peacocks." The peacock is an emblem of Buddhism, and the insignia of the Buddhist kings of Burma.

Meantime there was a curious series of revolutions at Diu, the seaport off the southern coast of Guzerat. Bahadur Shah, the Sultan of Guzerat,

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[26] Faria y Sousa, vol. i., page 417, *et seq.*

Sultan of Guzerat appeals to Turkey for help against the Portuguese.

was at war with the Rajpoots, and had succeeded in capturing Chittore.[27] At the same time he was so harassed by the devastating cruisers of the Portuguese, that in an unhappy moment he sought to obtain peace by allowing the Viceroy to erect a fort on the little island of Diu. No sooner, however, was the fort built and garrisoned, than the Sultan, as usual, began to regret having granted the concession, and to scheme for the expulsion of the Portuguese. Asiatic rulers are generally adepts at diplomacy, and are ever aiming at the formation of confederations and alliances, which would never suggest themselves to a European, and which rarely lead to any result. In the sixteenth century the Sultan of Turkey, better known as the Great Turk, was the terror of the Christian world. He was hated on account of his religion, and was as much feared as the first Napoleon. His prowess, especially since his conquest of Egypt in 1517, was no doubt a frequent theme amongst the Mecca pilgrims; and thus it came to pass that the Sultan of Guzerat sent an embassy with presents to Constantinople, and implored the assistance of the Great Turk against the Christian dogs of Portugal. Marvellous to relate, the mission was successful. The costliness and rarity of the presents from Guzerat so worked upon the imagination of the Ottoman, that he ordered the Pasha of Egypt to send a fleet to Diu. The whole story reads like a romance. The Pasha was only too eager to punish the infidels, and seize their treasures; and thus another Egyptian armada, consisting of seventy large ships and galleys, and carrying a strong force of Turkish Janissaries, made its way from Suez down the Red Sea, and finally appeared before Diu, under the command of Soliman Pasha.[28]

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[27] See *ante*, page 345.

Suspicious murder of the Sultan of Guzerat.

But by this time Bahadur Shah was dead. He had been killed by the Portuguese. Judging from two conflicting accounts of the same event, there had been treachery on both sides. Complimentary visits had been exchanged between the Sultan and the Commandant of the fort, and each is said to have contemplated the detention and murder of the other. Then the Viceroy proceeded to Diu, and other visits were exchanged. Both were now so suspicious of each other that a slight incident led to a fray on the Sultan's barge, in which the Commandant was cut down mortally wounded, and the Sultan was killed in trying to escape to the shore. After a horrible turmoil, another Sultan, named Mahmúd Shah, ascended the throne of Guzerat. This dynasty is perhaps better known in Europe than any other line of oriental sovereigns; for either Mahmúd, or one of his predecessors, was the veritable "Bluebeard" of nursery tradition. Whether Bluebeard or no, the Mahmúd who was reigning over Guzerat, when the Egyptian armada appeared before Diu under the command of Soliman Pasha, belonged unquestionably to the "Bluebeard" type of kings.

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[28] The description of Soliman Pasha by the Portuguese historian is an amusing expression of the old hatred of Christendom against the infidel. "Soliman," says Faria y Sousa, "was a Greek Janissary, born in the Morea. He was short and ugly. His belly was so big that he was more like a beast than a man; and being eighty years of age, he could not rise up without the help of four men. He was governor of Cairo, but purchased the command of the armada against the Portuguese by offering to supply the shipping at his own cost. In order to raise the purchase money, he put many rich persons to death, and seized their estates. He was a tyrant and a coward. He caused four hundred soldiers to be put to the oars, and then ordered two hundred to be executed because they complained. At Jedda he tried to take the king by treachery. At Aden he was more successful. He received a present and relief from the king of Aden. He then entertained the king on board his fleet. Meantime he pretended that he had many sick men on board, and sent them on shore privately armed. The result was that his 'sick men' took possession of the city of Aden, whilst the king was murdered on board the fleet. After this notable exploit Soliman proceeded to Diu."—Faria y Sousa, vol. i., page 433.

Portuguese besieged by the Turks, 1538.

The siege which followed is an obsolete story in the present day, but in the sixteenth century it was one of the great events in the history of the Portuguese. The Turkish Janissaries were landed, armed with bows and muskets; and excited the utmost alarm, even amongst their brother Mussulmans of Diu, by their brutality and insolence. During twenty days a heavy cannonade was directed against the Portuguese fort, whilst several desperate attempts were made by the Turks to carry it by storm. Unfortunately there was a change of Viceroys at the time, and no relief was sent from Goa. At last, when half the garrison were killed, and the remainder were subjected to the most horrible privations, a general assault was made by all the Turkish forces. It was repulsed by a band of heroes, who fought with the heroism of despair. But most of the Portuguese had now lost all hope. Powder and provisions were alike exhausted. At this critical moment the Egyptian fleet sailed away. The worn-out garrison could scarcely believe their eyes. They suspected treachery, and kept the best watch they could till morning. Then they saw that the Turks had really gone. Subsequently they discovered that the Sultan of Guzerat had grown so heartily sick of the Egyptian allies, that he had frightened them away by false reports that a great fleet from Portugal was at hand.[29] The policy pur-

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[29] Faria y Sousa, vol. i., p. 444. On his way back to Egypt, Soliman is said

Sudden departure of the Turkish expedition.

sued throughout by the Guzerat Sultan is all of the same character. He had been forced into friendly alliance with the Portuguese. He had then implored the aid of Turkey to help him to get rid of his Portuguese allies. He had next grown anxious for the departure of the Turks. Finally he seems to have come to terms once more with the Portuguese, without abandoning the hope of effecting their ultimate expulsion from the Eastern Seas.

Rejoicings in Portugal.

The news of this glorious repulse of the Turks filled the whole Portuguese nation with joy and exultation. The brave Commandant of Diu returned to Lisbon, and was received at the capital with the highest honours. Scarcely had his ship anchored in the Tagus, when all the Court nobles thronged on board to conduct him to the presence of the king and queen. Indeed so great was his fame that all the foreign ambassadors came to do him honour; and the French ambassador was so enthusiastic as to engage an artist to paint the portrait of the brave man, who had repulsed the Great Turk on the Indian shores.

Second siege of Diu: triumph of the Viceroy.

Seven years later, in 1545, the Sultan of Guzerat made another attempt to expel the Portuguese from Diu. The details were famous at the time, but are of little interest now. On that occasion the Viceroy relieved the fort in person; and on returning to Goa was received with all the honours of a Roman triumph. He was crowned with laurel, and accompanied through the streets of Goa by a procession of prisoners, cannon, and carts loaded with arms. Salutes were fired, bands of music were playing,

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to have captured a hundred and forty Portuguese in Arabia, and to have sent their heads, noses, and ears to the Great Turk as trophies of his victory.

the streets were adorned with silks, and fair women thronged at the windows, and threw flowers and sweet waters on the victor. When the Queen of Portugal heard the story, she observed that the Viceroy had conquered like a Christian, but triumphed like a heathen.[30]

Overthrow of the Hindú empire of Narsinga, 1565.

Twenty years of comparative quiet followed this last triumph. Meantime revolutions were convulsing India, which could not fail of influencing the affairs of the Portuguese. In Hindustan the Moguls had established a paramount power; and the illustrious Akber had pushed his empire to the bay of Bengal, and established his suzerainty over the greater portion of Rajpootana. In the Dekhan the Mussulman Sultans of Bíjápúr and Golcónda were exposed to constant aggressions from the unwieldy Hindú empire of Narsinga. The reigning Hindú sovereign of the Peninsula at this period was Ráma Rai, a potentate who is as celebrated as his great predecessor Krishna Rai. The haughtiness and arrogance of this great Raja is without a parallel in European history. He seems to have been an embodiment of Southey's conception of Kehama. He treated the envoys from the Sultans of Bíjápúr and Golcónda with such pride and insolence, that on their return to their own courts, they threw down their turbans before their sovereigns, and demanded revenge against the infidel. For a brief interval all political rivalries and jealousies were cast aside; and a flash of the old Bedouin enthusiasm, which carried the banners of the Khalifat to the Oxus and the Indus, was kindled in the breasts of the Mussulmans.

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[30] Faria y Sousa, vol. ii., p. 116.

In 1565 four of the Sultans of the Dekhan joined hands and hearts against the idolaters. Ráma Rai assembled his vast hosts of Hindús, but they fell like sheep before the slaughtering artillery of the Mussulmans. A hundred thousand Hindús were slain. Ráma Rai was himself taken prisoner, on which his head was straightway cut off and exposed on a spear. All was lost by the Hindús. The avenging army of Mussulmans rushed on like a resistless flood, and forced an entrance into the great capital of Vijayanagar, which for centuries had proved impregnable. This splendid city had long been one of the wonders of the world. It was the great centre of the Brahmanical religion in the Peninsula. Festivals and sacrifices were performed with a magnificence which is almost beyond belief. The court was the scene of successive assassinations and intrigues, which are almost without a parallel, even in oriental history; whilst the public establishments of courtesans were famous throughout the east.[31] The city itself was a Hindú metropolis of stone and granite; and the paved cities and aqueducts, the granite palaces, temples, and fortifications, still remain in lonely grandeur to testify to the mighty conceptions of the old Hindú Rajas. The plunder must have been immense, for the city was one vast treasury of gold and jewels. Its capture was a death-blow to the last great Hindú empire in India. The deputy governors of the little kingdoms of Southern India asserted their independence, and then in their turn began to fall one after the other before the aggression of the Mussulmans or the Mahrattas. Thus within another century of the famous battle of Talikotta in 1565, the memory of the old empire of Narsinga was fast passing away.[32]

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[31] Our knowledge of the empire of Narsinga or Vijayanagar is chiefly derived from Mussulman writers; and therefore will be brought under review in dealing with the history of the wars between the Mussulmans of the Dekhan and the Hindús of the Peninsula.

Disastrous results to the Portuguese.

The results of this last great struggle between Mussulman and Hindú were most disastrous to the Portuguese. Amidst such a convulsion all trade was of course at a stand-still. Meantime the Sultans of Ahmednagar and Bíjápúr combined with the Zamorin of Calicut to expel the Portuguese from Chaul and Goa. The Zamorin failed to keep his engagement, but the two Sultans succeeded in making simultaneous attacks on the two Portuguese cities. But the old jealousies had begun to revive, and although they carried on both sieges for months, they failed to capture either place, and at last separately concluded a peace.

Decline of the Portuguese power in India, 1603.

From this period the political history of the Portuguese in India is devoid of interest. Their great commercial rivals, the Dutch, began to appear in India, and to deprive them of many of their best possessions. In 1603 the Dutch besieged Goa, and though they failed to take it, they inflicted a severe blow upon the political power of Portugal in the east. The Portuguese maintained some outward show for a century longer, but meantime they were harassed by the Mahrattas, and impoverished by the loss of trade which was passing into the hands of the Dutch and English. At last the people of Goa sunk into squalid poverty. The city became unhealthy and the government was transferred to the new town of Panjim or New Goa. In the present day Old Goa is still an object of the deepest interest; its glory has passed away, but the surrounding scenery is as beautiful as ever; whilst the magnificence of its ruins are beyond the finest European architecture in either Calcutta, Madras, or Bombay.

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[32] Faria y Sousa, vol. ii. Ferishta's history of the Dekhan, Scott's translation, vol. i. Selections from the Mackenzie MSS. made by the author. Folio.

Palmy days of Goa, 1583.

The palmy days of Goa must have been about the latter end of the sixteenth century. At that time the whole of northern India was quieting down under the mild and tolerant rule of the Mogul emperor Akber; whilst the Dekhan and the Peninsula had ceased to be the theatre of a deadly struggle between Mussulmans and Hindús. The Portuguese themselves were no longer threatened by the Mussulman Sultans of Ahmednagar and Bíjápore, and were not as yet exposed to the hostilities of the Dutch. Goa had thus attained to the zenith of her prosperity. As yet it showed no outward symptoms of decay; although the old political vitality was already on the wane, owing partly to the oriental influences of the women, and partly to the universal craving for gold.

Magnificence of Goa.

To all external appearance Goa must have been at this period an imposing city. Amidst the busiest scenes of traffic, there was an air of stately magnificence and ecclesiastical grandeur, softened down by the voluptuous languor of an oriental clime. Here the illustrious Camoens, the national poet of Portugal, drank in the inspiration, under which he composed his once famous epic of the Lusiad; and the atmosphere of Goa,—the spirit of daring enterprise, religious crusade, and impassioned love,—seems to be still breathing through his mellifluous strains.[33]

View of the city and shipping.

The city of Goa was situated on the northern part of a picturesque island, about twelve miles long and six broad. Here the island is separated from the main land by an arm of the sea, in which the shipping lay at anchor; and thus the city overlooked the harbour and ships, and the green landscape beyond. The visitor as he landed would see the bank beautified with churches and forts, as well as with the private mansions of the wealthy, each having its garden and orchard walled off in complete seclusion. Next his eye would rest on the Viceroy's palace, which was built over the city gate facing the river. Passing through this gate into the city, he would enter a fine broad street half a mile in length, which terminated in a beautiful church to Our Lady of Mercy. In front of this church was the great market-place, or Exchange; and round about the market were streets of native shops in which every class of artisans was at work, and every kind of commodity or curiosity might be purchased from the retailers, including goods from Europe, Guzerat, Ceylon, Bengal, Burma, China, and Japan.[34]

Morning at Goa.

Every morning the sun rose at Goa upon scenes which may be easily realized. The sailors and coolies loading or unloading in the river; the busy shopkeepers displaying their wares; the slaves bringing in the supplies of water and provisions for the day. There was the palace of the Viceroy, surrounded by majestic Hidalgoes giving and exchanging the profoundest courtesies. Many were perhaps making their way to the great hall of council, which was hung with pictures of every Viceroy and Governor from Vasco de Gama downwards. There was also the palace of the Archbishop, with a crowd of black-robed priests, missionaries, and clergy of every description, native as well as European. Besides these were the courts and offices of the king's council and chancery, with busy clerks labouring at their desks, but all in grave and stately fashion after the proud manner of the noble Portuguese. Meantime, above the noise of offices and bazaars, the bells were ever ringing from the numerous churches and monasteries, and filling the whole city with an ecclesiastical clangour.

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[33] The social and religious culture of the Portuguese city of Goa towards the end of the sixteenth century is depicted in the travels of John Van Linschoten, an honest Dutchman, who sailed from Lisbon to Goa in 1583. This narrative is published in Purchas's Pilgrims, and was reprinted by the author (Early Travels in India. Calcutta, 1864). The description of Goa furnished in the text is chiefly based on the narrative of Linschoten. Other authorities will be specially cited as occasion requires.

[34] Captain Hamilton's Account of the East Indies, chap. xxi. Edinburgh, 1727.

The Exchange.

On ordinary days the great centre of attraction would be the Exchange, which was held every morning, except Sundays and holidays, in the market-place already described. It commenced at sunrise, and was generally over by nine o'clock, but it never lasted until noon on account of the heat. It resembled the old Fairs of Europe, only that gentlemen of noble birth and high degree attended and speculated as well as ordinary dealers. It was a kind of auction at which goods were sold at public outcry, by criers specially appointed for the purpose. Some of these criers would be running about, hung with costly chains, jewels, pearls, rings, and precious stones, which they were offering for sale. Others would be disposing of bales of damasks, velvets, silks, satins, spices, drugs, pepper, porcelain, or other merchandise. Some, again, might be selling

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the property of deceased individuals; for according to the law of Goa, whenever a man died, from the Viceroy downwards, his goods were sold by outcry at this Exchange, to the utmost farthing, for the benefit of his heirs. But the worse feature of the Exchange was the sale of slaves, male and female. Many were purchased to serve as menial servants. Others, again, were bought to make money for their masters by being hired out for occasional services. Women slaves were taught to make sweetmeats, confections, and wrought muslin handkerchiefs, for sale in the streets. The youngest and fairest were then sent out to offer these things for sale; and at the same time they were expected to earn money for their owner by more objectionable ways.[35]

Profits of money exchanges.

There was another way of making profit at the Exchange, besides mere trading speculations; and one which was supposed to be secretly carried on, not only by gentlemen but by the ecclesiastics. This was money-changing. The Portuguese ships generally arrived at Goa in September, and then sought to exchange their rials for Persian money, which was required for the purchase of pepper and spices at Cochin. Then, again, every April the ships going to China were glad to give Persian money for rials, which were required for the purchase of silks and porcelain. This money-changing involved no risk whatever, and produced a profit of thirty to forty per cent.

Motley crowd at the Exchange.

The crowd that assembled every morning at the Exchange included representatives of every class and nationality,—Jews, Armenians, Banians, Persians,

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[35] Linschoten, *passim*.

Arabs, Mussulmans, and Christians generally. But the most prominent personages of all, were the solemn Portuguese gentlemen, walking slowly along with dignified majesty, and giving and returning the most profound salutations, hat in hand. The health of the Viceroy had to be discussed, the news brought by the last ships, the state of foreign affairs throughout Asia, the prospects of war or trade; and all this discourse was carried on with the utmost gravity and stateliness, and in carefully selected language and well-measured tones. Each gentleman was also followed by a slave-boy to hold the umbrella over his head, and carry his cloak and rapier, or the cushion on which he would kneel at mass. Some of these haughty gentlemen were mere common soldiers, whose pay was only equivalent to nine or ten shillings a month, out of which they had to maintain themselves as they best could. How they further eked out their living, and were enabled to make such a brave appearance, will fully appear hereafter.

Sundays and Saint days:. Portuguese ladies.

On Sundays and Saints days there was no Exchange, and all the Christian population of the city attended mass. Indeed on such occasions the churches presented many attractions besides those of religious worship. It was only at church that the Portuguese allowed their wives and daughters to appear, and then they were rigidly watched and guarded. Some were fair and graceful, but all were oriental both in their complexion and attire. At home, in their zenana-like seclusion, they were content to wear muslin jackets and gay cotton clothes after native fashion; but at church they were decked out in all the bravery of velvet, damask, or cloth of gold; and decorated with earrings, bracelets, and bangles of the costliest description, and of the same golden shade of colour as their complexions. Here, again, the Portuguese gentlemen displayed the same courtliness of manner as in the streets; and exchanged the same reverential salutations.

Social condition of the Portuguese soldiers.

Beneath this outward show of religion and decorum strange social influences were at work, which throw a new light upon the social development in a mixed community of Europeans and orientals. The unmarried men, who came out from Portugal every year as soldiers, were wretchedly poor and absurdly proud, and at the same time lawless and dissolute. Their poverty was unmistakable. When not quartered on board the shipping, they lived together ten or twelve in a house, subsisting as they best could on boiled rice and salt fish, and wearing the meanest attire. Their pride was often very amusing. The inmates of each house generally managed, in spite of their pauperism, to be provided with one or two suits of silk attire, which they would wear in turns, and in this economical fashion make as brave a show as if their pockets were lined with rials. At such times they were as punctilious as the best gentlemen in Goa on the score of personal dignity and respect. They all claimed to be gentlemen, and to be treated as such; and if this claim were ignored they sought means of revenge, which ensured them a better treatment for the future. If one of them made a salutation which was not returned with equal respect; or paid a visit and was not received at the door by the master of the house hat in hand; or was offered a stool which was of inferior height to the one occupied by the host; the indignant gentleman would collect ten or twelve of his companions, and fall upon the offender at some unguarded moment, and beat him with bamboos, or bags of sand, until he was dangerously wounded, if not brutally murdered.

Demoralization resulting from mixed marriages.

From the first foundation of Goa these dangerous bravos had been the pest of the city. When expeditions were being undertaken, or reliefs were being sent out, the services of such men were of course in great demand; but when not so employed, they were generally idling their way on the island, indulging in theft, debauchery, and outrage, to an extent which made them obnoxious to all classes, and especially to the native population. About 1512 the great Albuquerque had endeavoured to bring this turbulent class to order, and at the same time promote the spread of Christianity amongst the natives, by marrying a number of the soldiers to native female converts, and providing them with permanent posts and employments. The experiment seems to have been a failure from the commencement. A number of native girls were baptized and married off to a number of drunken soldiers; but this was done with so much precipitation, and amidst so much confusion, that many whimsical mistakes were made as regards the right partners, which under the circumstances were permitted to stand. But these girls were Christian only in name. They still retained their native ideas and usages. They could derive no intellectual or religious advantages from their husbands, whilst bringing them under the influence of their own social ideas, and rendering them as Asiatic as themselves. Within two or three generations the daughters of mixed parentage had become natives in everything except the name; whilst those of pure Portuguese descent, who had been born and bred at Goa, may have been of somewhat lighter complexion, but otherwise were equally native in all their thoughts and ways. They lounged away their lives in their back rooms and gardens, entirely concealed from the society of the other sex; and went about in native attire, eating their curry and rice with their hands, and doing little or nothing beyond chattering to their slaves, chewing betel leaves, rubbing themselves with sandal, smelling perfumes and sweet herbs, and consuming handfulls of cloves, pepper, and ginger, after native fashion. Meantime they were supposed to converse with none of the other sex who had passed their boyhood, excepting their own husbands; and consequently their companionship exercised no refining influence upon the social circle, or kindled any sentiments of chivalry or devotion.

Degeneracy of the female population.

Before the end of the sixteenth century the whole so-called Portuguese population of Goa had become hopelessly degenerated. The men treated their wives and daughters with all the jealousy of orientals, whilst both sexes were demoralized by their association with their slaves. Meantime, in spite of every precaution, and perhaps as a consequence of these precautions, the wives of the Portuguese were notorious for their amours with the poor but unscrupulous soldiers from Portugal, and would lavish upon them money and favours of every kind. Intrigues were carried on through the medium of the slaves; husbands were drugged; propriety was forgotten; and occasionally a wife was murdered by her infuriated lord, and no cognisance whatever was taken of the crime. The fact was that the conversion of native girls from heathenism to nominal Christianity had loosened the obligations of caste and Brahmanical law, and substituted no other obligation worthy of the name. The poor orientalized Portuguese women had little to fear beyond detection; whilst they had no social or intellectual training to satisfy the aspirations of humanity and elevate and purify the affections.

Depraved state of morals.

Whilst the Portuguese population of Goa was thus becoming at once orientalized and demoralized, the Catholic church of the Portuguese in India was undergoing a similar transformation. The discovery of the Indies had been received with exultation by the whole Christian world. In those days of unclouded faith, the Hindús were regarded in a very different light to the Mussulmans. They did not provoke the crusading hatred, which found expression in slaughtering wars against the perverse followers of the Prophet. On the contrary, they rather stirred up a profound pity for the millions who worshipped idols from sheer ignorance of a Redeemer, and who only required the teachings of the holy church to become at once converted and baptized. Nor was this idea altogether a mistaken one. Francis Xavier, a type of the zealous missionaries of the sixteenth century, had converted thousands of the heathen in Malabar, as well as in Malacca, and other remote regions of the east; and established churches of purely native growth far away from the corrupting influence of the depraved Portuguese. Indeed the Christian priests of those days were men who proved their earnestness and sincerity by the sacrifice of all that is dear to humanity; who had been imbued with the highest intellectual culture of the age; and who preached with a vehemence of soul, which could not fail to carry conviction to the minds of their auditors. There is consequently every reason to believe that thousands were converted that could not be converted now, excepting by the employment of a similar agency.

Conversions effected by the Roman Catholic missionaries.

The sixteenth century was indeed the golden era of Catholic Christianity in the east. The Society of Jesus had imparted a new spiritual life to the Church of Rome at the most critical period of her history. They enforced a strictness of discipline, a perfect subordination, and a uniformity of religious teaching, which imparted a peculiar force to their missionary operations, and for a long time promised a still greater success than was even attained. Moreover the form of teaching was admirably adapted to the religious culture of the Hindús. The Jesuit missionaries commenced their operations by simply teaching the creed and the ten commandments, and thus made religion and morality the basis of their sermons.[36] Through the creed they appealed directly to the affections, the love of Deity for suffering humanity; whilst through the ten commandments they appealed still more directly to that moral sense, which is rarely wanting in the most barbarous communities, and which twenty centuries before had imbued the teachings of Gótama

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[36] Marshall's Christian Missions, vol. i., chap. 3, part i. Catholic Missions in India, London, 1863.

Labours of the Jesuits.

Buddha with vitality and power. Meantime the personal influence of the Jesuits was equal to that of the Bráhman sages of old; and not only was their moral life without a stain, but they excited the utmost respect and veneration by their daily austerities and self-denial. Bad priests there were, as there always will be; but such offenders were placed under the ban of excommunication, and were either lingering away their lives in the cells of the Inquisition, or joining the piratical outlaws who had thrown off all the obligations of religion and morality, and were leading lives of unbridled violence and wickedness in the more secluded quarters of the Eastern seas.

Relapses into heathenism.

But whilst numbers of the heathen may have embraced Christianity and received the rite of baptism, the relapses were apparently numerous, and must have often been disheartening. One petty Raja on the Malabar coast had embraced Christianity, and been baptized. He had then proceeded to Goa of his own free will, and been confirmed with the utmost pomp and ceremonial in the magnificent Cathedral. Yet very shortly afterwards he not only abandoned his new principles, but actually joined a military confederacy, which the Zamorin of Calicut was attempting to form against the Portuguese. The difficulties experienced in contending against this backsliding tendency cannot be over-estimated. The enthusiasm under which native converts embrace a new faith soon dies away under the perpetual influence of relatives and friends. It was only after Christian communities had been maintained for one or more generations, that the new faith became a heritage; and in this manner many Christian villages have preserved their distinctive religion for centuries amidst all their heathen surroundings. But this phase in the progress of Christianity belongs to a later stage of history.

Establishment of an Inquisition: orientalization of Portuguese Christianity.

Meantime an Inquisition had been set up at Goa for the suppression of heresy and schism; but it was soon found that severity towards native converts only scared the masses from embracing Christianity. The consequence was that a leniency and compromise crept in, until at last the Portuguese church in India became as orientalized as the Portuguese community. There were, moreover, other causes at work which contributed to the same unhappy results. When the loss of trade impoverished the people of Goa, the church became the only refuge for many of her once wealthy families; and fortunately the monastic institutions had been so richly endowed in the sixteenth century, as to be able to support a considerable number of monks during the subsequent period. The Portuguese monks, however, naturally adapted their ceremonial more and more to the oriental tastes of the people around them, until the Portuguese church in India may almost be said to have become half Hinduized. For many years the Society of the Propaganda has exerted itself to purge the ritual of the Indian churches of this element of heathenism; and it is believed that of late years they have in a great measure succeeded, although they cannot entirely remove the stain from the mixed Portuguese communities.

Revolt of European energy against oriental effeminacy.

Whilst the orientalized population of Goa was sinking into luxury and effeminacy, the more adventurous spirits, who were as yet fresh from Spain and Portugal, and still retained their European energy, were panting to escape from its oriental languor. The occasional expeditions along the coast failed to satisfy their craving for change and excitement; and they burned for the freedom and license of a life of piracy and plunder. Among these were some recreant priests, whose character it is difficult to determine. They were apparently eager to fly from the stifling atmosphere of the Church and Monastery, and to indulge in unhallowed pleasures; but they were not prepared openly to abandon their vows, or cast aside their very slender claims to the priestly character. However, the result was that within thirty or forty years of the foundation of Goa, Portuguese free lances had entered the services of different kings in Burma; whilst a motley settlement of priests and pirates was already growing up in the port of Chittagong, and threatening to become the terror of the Bay of Bengal.

Portuguese free lances.

The adventures of the Portuguese free lances who took service in Burma during the sixteenth century are replete with interest, but belong more directly to the history of the Malacca peninsula, which will be brought under review in a future volume. In the present chapter it is proposed to deal only with the Portuguese settlement at Chittagong, and the progress of affairs on the north and Eastern shores of this Bay, namely, the coast of Lower Bengal, and the coast of Arakan.

Lower Bengal desolated by the pirates of Chittagong.

Lower Bengal, at the head of the Bay of the same name, is formed by the delta of the Ganges. This river, after flowing towards the east as far as the ancient metropolis of Gour, suddenly diverges towards the south, and flows in two different streams into the Bay. The westerly stream is known as the

Húghly, and flows past Calcutta into the Bay at the Sandheads. The easterly stream, which is the main stream of the Ganges, flows in a broad current into the Bay at Chittagong. This once important port of Chittagong is thus seated on the north-east angle of the Bay of Bengal. Towards the west it commands the coast of Bengal; towards the south it commands the coast of Arakan. Lower Bengal, on the delta of the Ganges, was the theatre of most of the exploits of the pirates of Chittagong. The whole of this delta is traversed by numerous small rivers and canals; whilst the southern fringe bordering on the Bay is a labyrinth of creeks and islands. In the sixteenth century the delta was well populated, and part of it was under the dominion of the kings of Backergunj and Bulloah, who were independent of the Mogul; and even the southern fringe, known as the Sunderbunds, was covered with villages, whose inhabitants lived chiefly by cultivation, fishing, and salt manufacturing.

Portuguese outlaws entertained by the king of Arakan.

In the sixteenth century the king of Arakan was already in great alarm at the growing power of the Moguls. He had taken advantage of the wars between the Moguls and Afghans in Hindustan to secure possession of the important port of Chittagong; and he made over Chittagong to the Portuguese outlaws, and encouraged them to settle there, in the hope that they would prove a strong barrier against Mogul aggression. He provided the Portuguese with wives and lands, and left them to their own devices, to lead lives as lawless as they pleased, and to plunder and devastate where they would, so long as they respected his territories. The result was that Chittagong became a nest of licentious brigands, who committed every kind of violence and debauchery, and would even murder a priest without compunction.[37]

Piratical and slave-stealing expeditions.

Whilst the private lives of these outlaws were all that is bad, it is by no means surprising that their more public avocations were equally as detestable. Their only occupation was war, rapine, and slave-stealing. They constructed fleets of very light galleys, known as galliases; and engaged in marauding and kidnapping expeditions up the creeks and rivers of the Sunderbunds, and devastated the delta of the Ganges as far northward as Dacca. On such occasions they would attack villages on market-days, or on festival seasons, or at the celebration of a marriage, and carry off the whole population into slavery, including young and old of both sexes. Some they retained as slaves in their own service at Chittagong; others were sold to regular dealers, and carried off to St Thomé, Ceylon, and Goa, where they were offered for sale in the bazaars. Indeed the horrors committed by these atrocious brigands are beyond conception; and to crown all, they often boasted that by these means they had made more converts to Christianity than all the missionaries and priests throughout India.

Weakness of the Mogul governors.

Meantime the Mogul governors of Bengal seem to have been altogether unable to cope with these outlaws. They maintained considerable forces to guard the inlets to the rivers, and they formed a large fleet of galleys with the view of punishing or overawing the marauders; but the Portuguese were enabled to proceed with such surprising swiftness, and exhibited so much prowess when they came to close fighting, that the Moguls were totally unable to suppress them. All that could be done was to build a Fort at Dacca, and endeavour to protect that city; whilst the Sunderbunds were gradually becoming depopulated, and the panic-stricken inhabitants were endeavouring to find new homes elsewhere.

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[37] Bernier's Travels in the Mogul Empire, vol. i., pages 120, 191. Translated from the French by J. Brock. Calcutta edition. Also notes E and F. in Appendix to vol. ii.

Adventures of Sebastian Gonzales.

About this period a low-born Spanish adventurer, named Sebastian Gonzales of Tibao, attained considerable notoriety in this remote quarter; and his life may be accepted as a type of the class of unscrupulous desperadoes of the time. Sebastian Gonzales left Spain for India in 1605, and became successively a soldier, a dealer in salt, and a pirate on the seas. At this time the Portuguese of Chittagong paid no allegiance whatever to the king of Arakan, and often plundered his ports and shipping. Sebastian Gonzales succeeded in taking possession of the island of Sundíva in the immediate neighbourhood; and signalized his success by arresting and putting to death every Mussulman on the island. He then became sovereign lord of Sundíva, and maintained a force of one thousand Portuguese, two thousand natives well armed, and a fleet of eighty sail with numerous cannon. By these means Sebastian Gonzales accumulated immense riches, and made himself a terror far and wide. Meantime a revolution took place in Arakan, which was common enough in the Burmese kingdoms of that age. The king of Arakan was expelled from his throne, and compelled to take refuge in the island of Sundíva, together with his family and treasures. Sebastian

Gonzales received the ex-king with ostentatious hospitality, and demanded his sister in marriage, under pretence of doing him honour; and the ex-king was actually compelled to see his sister baptized into Christianity, and become the wife of the low-born adventurer. The unfortunate monarch died soon afterwards on the island, and not without suspicion of poison, especially as Gonzales seized all his effects immediately afterwards, and converted them to his own use. This spoliation of the exiled sovereign excited so much murmuring, that Gonzales tried to quiet the general indignation, by giving the widowed queen in marriage to his own brother, a low adventurer like himself, who commanded the fleet of Sundíva. The Buddhist princess, however, obstinately refused to be converted to Christianity, and was ultimately sent back to Arakan.

Tragical end of Gonzales.

The piracies and treacheries of Sebastian Gonzales raised up enemies against him on all sides. He formed an alliance with the new king of Arakan against the Mogul, and then not only abandoned his ally, but destroyed the Arakan fleet. Then he treated with the Viceroy of Goa on the footing of an independent prince, and induced the Viceroy to undertake an expedition against Arakan. But the attempt terminated in failure. The Portuguese admiral was instructed to attack Arakan without waiting for the arrival of Sebastian Gonzales; and on that occasion was attacked and defeated by the Dutch fleet. Subsequently the admiral was killed, and Sebastian Gonzales perished very miserably.

Fra Joan.

After this, the island of Sundíva fell into the possession of an Augustine monk, known as Fra Joan, who ruled over it for many years as a petty sovereign. But the further history is lost in obscurity.

Portuguese settlement at Húghly: slave market at Palmiras.

Meantime the Mogul emperors Akber and Jehángír had been too much occupied with the affairs of western India to bestow much attention upon this remote quarter of Eastern Bengal. Jehángír, who reigned from 1605 to 1627, had allowed the Portuguese of Goa to form a settlement at the village of Húghly, on the river of the same name, on the condition that they suppressed the Chittagong piracies in the Bay. But instead of attempting to fulfil this obligation, the Portuguese of Húghly came to terms with the pirates, and shared largely in the profits of the slave trade. A regular depôt was established at a small island off Cape Palmiras, near the mouth of the Húghly, where they purchased ship-loads of these slaves at a low rate from the kidnappers; and the unfortunate captives were then either taken to Húghly and converted to Christianity, or carried for sale to other ports in India.

Portuguese of Húghly reduced to slaves by Shah Jehan.

At last the emperor Shah Jehan, who reigned 1627—58, resolved to put a stop to this flagrant scandal. Indeed no Mussulman prince could be expected to permit foreigners to settle in his dominions, who persisted, not only in enslaving his own subjects, but in forcibly converting them to a religion which was regarded with hatred and contempt. Accordingly Shah Jehan ordered the Portuguese of Húghly to surrender all of his subjects whom they had kept as slaves. The Portuguese refused, and soon had bitter cause to repent having done so; for the emperor exacted a vengeance, which at this distance of time cannot be contemplated without horror. The whole of the

Portuguese population of Húghly were stripped of all they possessed, and carried away to Agra as slaves. The younger and more beautiful women were transferred to the imperial seraglio. The remainder were distributed amongst the nobles of the court. The children were forcibly converted to Islam. The men were daily threatened with being trampled to death by elephants unless they became Mussulmans; and at the same time were so tempted by promises of promotion or reward, that they nearly all became renegades. But it is unnecessary to dwell upon their misery. It was compared at the time to the Babylonian captivity of the Jews.

Misfortunes of Shah Shayah in Arakan.

The destruction of the Portuguese of Húghly was not, however, followed by the suppression of piracy. Indeed in that revolutionary age the Portuguese of Chittagong had every inducement to continue their depredations, excepting that there was little left to plunder, and but few remaining to carry away as slaves. During the latter years of the reign of Shah Jehan, the whole of Hindustan was convulsed by the rebellion of his sons. At length prince Shujah was utterly defeated by the forces of his elder brother Aurangzíb, and compelled to fly to Dacca; whence he escaped to Arakan with his family and treasures on board the galleys of the outlaw Portuguese. The subsequent misfortunes of this prince form one of the most melancholy episodes in Indian history. The king of Arakan demanded one of his daughters in marriage; and the Mussulman prince naturally refused to give a princess of the house of Timour to a Buddhist sovereign, whom he regarded as an idolater and barbarian. The king of Arakan was infuriated by the refusal, but would not be gainsaid. The Mogul princess was forced to become his wife. A conspiracy was formed by prince Shujah amongst the Mussulman residents in Arakan for effecting his escape from that inhospitable shore; but the plot was discovered by the king of Arakan. The prince and all his family were put to a miserable death, and the unfortunate princess who had married the king, was brutally murdered when she was about to become a mother.

Revenge of Aurangzíb.

Although the emperor Aurangzíb was thus delivered from a dangerous rival, he was determined to be revenged upon the king of Arakan, and prove to all the neighbouring princes that under no circumstances should any member of the imperial family be treated otherwise than with respect and reverence. Accordingly as soon as he was established on the imperial throne of Hindustan, he appointed his uncle Shaista Khan to be Viceroy of Bengal, with instructions to inflict a fitting punishment upon the king of Arakan, and to suppress at once and for ever the piracies and kidnapping practices of the Portuguese outlaws.

Destruction of the Portuguese pirates by Shaista Khan.

Shaista Khan carried out this work somewhat insidiously after Asiatic fashion, but otherwise thoroughly and well. He sent messengers to the Portuguese at Chittagong informing them that the emperor had resolved on the destruction of the king of Arakan; that a Dutch fleet was already on the way to fulfil his vengeance with an overwhelming force which it would be useless to resist; that if they would save themselves from impending ruin, they must at once desert the cause of the king of Arakan; and that if they came to Dacca, and entered the service of the emperor, they would be well entertained, and receive double the pay they had ever obtained from their Arakan master. The messengers arrived at Chittagong at a favourable moment. The outlaws had just murdered some officers of the king, and were fearful of condign punishment. Whilst stricken with a panic they received the invitation of Shaista Khan, and at once hastened to Dacca in their galleys with their respective families, and such goods as they could carry away. With the assistance of their fleet Shaista Khan carried a large force to Arakan, and inflicted a crushing defeat upon the king, and took possession of Chittagong; and then, having no longer occasion for the services of the Portuguese outlaws, and having also got them completely into his power, he treated them as traitors, and declined to fulfil any one of his promises. From that time the Portuguese lingered out a wretched existence, and ultimately died out of the land; but the desolation of the Sunderbunds remains to this day as a terrible memorial of the old piratical times, which, it is hoped, have now passed away for ever from the Eastern seas.[38]

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[38] The foregoing account of the destruction of the Portuguese pirates is based on the authority of Berniers and Faria y Sousa.

APPENDIX I.

EDICTS OF ASOKA (PRIYADARSI).

[THE translations of the edicts of Asoka are here arranged for easy reference in parallel columns. The translations originally executed by Mr James Prinsep are printed in the right column, and the revised translation by Professor H. H. Wilson are printed in the left column. They are extracted from the Asiatic Society's Journal, vols. viii. and xii. The conclusions stated in chap. iv. of the present volume are based entirely upon the revised translation of Professor Wilson, unless the contrary is stated.[1]]

TABLET I.

Prof. Wilson's Translation.	*Mr Prinsep's Translation.*
This is the edict of the beloved of the gods, Raja Priyadasi; the putting to death of animals is to be entirely discontinued, and no convivial meeting is to be held, for the beloved of the gods, the Raja Priyadasi, remarks many faults in such assemblies. There is but one assembly, indeed, which is approved of by the Raja Priyadasi, the beloved of the gods, which is that of the great kitchen of Raja Priyadasi, the	"The following edict of religion is promulgated by the heaven-beloved king PIYADASI. 'In this place the putting to death of anything whatever that hath life, either for the benefit of the puja, or in convivial meetings, shall not be done. Much cruelty of this nature occurs in such assemblies. The heaven-beloved king PIYADASI is (as it were) a father (to his people). Uniformity of worship is wise and proper for the con-

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[1] The Sanskrit form Priyadarsi is adhered to in the history for the sake of uniformity. It is variously spelt Priyadasi and Piyadasi in the inscriptions, and consequently is not altered in the translations.

beloved of the gods; every day hundreds of thousands of animals have been there slaughtered for virtuous purposes, but now although this pious edict is proclaimed that animals may be killed for good purposes, and such is the practice, yet as the practice is not determined, these presents are proclaimed that hereafter they shall not be killed.

gregation of the heaven-beloved PIYADASI rája.

"Formerly in the great refectory and temple of the heaven-beloved king PIYADASI, daily were many hundred thousand animals sacrificed for the sake of meat food. So even at this day while this religious edict is under promulgation from the sacrifice of animals for the sake of food, some two are killed, or one is killed:—but now the joyful chorus resounds again and again—that from henceforward not a single animal shall be put to death."

TABLET II.

Prof. Wilson's Translation.

In all the subjugated (territories) of the King Priyadasi, the beloved of the gods, and also in the bordering countries, as (Chóda), Palaya, (or Paraya,) Satyaputra, Keralaputra, Tambapani, (it is proclaimed), and Antiochus by name, the Yona (or Yavana) Raja, and those princes who are near to, (or allied with) that monarch, universally (are apprised) that (two designs have been cherished by Priyadasi: one design) regarding men, and one relating to animals; and whatever herbs are useful to men or useful to animals, wherever there are none, such have been everywhere caused to be conveyed

Mr Prinsep's Translation.

"Everywhere within the conquered province of rája PIYADASI the beloved of the Gods, as well as in the parts occupied by the faithful, such as *Chola*, *Pîda*, *Satiyaputra*, and *Ketalaputra*, even as far as *Tambapanní* (Ceylon); and moreover within the dominions of ANTIOCHUS, the Greek, (of which ANTIOCHUS's generals are the rulers,)—everywhere the heaven-beloved rája PÍYADASÍ's double system of medical aid is established;—both medical aid for men, and medical aid for animals; together with the medicaments of all sorts, which are suitable for men, and suitable for animals. And wherever and planted, (and roots and fruits wherever there are none, such have been everywhere conveyed and planted; and on the roads) wells have been caused to be dug, (and trees have been planted) for the respective enjoyment of animals and men.

there is not (such provision)—in all such places they are to be prepared, and to be planted; both root-drugs and herbs, wheresoever there is not (a provision of them) in all such places shall they be deposited and planted."

"And in the public highways wells are to be dug, and trees to be planted, for the accommodation of men and animals."

TABLET III.

Prof. Wilson's Translation.

King Priyadasi says, This was ordered by me when I had been twelve years inaugurated in the conquered country, and among my own subjects as well as strangers, that every five years' expiation should be undergone with this object, for the enforcement of such moral obligations as were declared by me to be good; such as duty to parents, (and protection of) friends, children, (relations, Brahmans and Sramans;) good is liberality, good is non-injury of living creatures, and abstinence from prodigality and slander are good. Continuance in this course, (the discharge of these duties) shall be commanded both by explanation and example.

Mr Prinsep's Translation.

"Thus spake the heaven-beloved King Piyadasi:—

"By me after the twelfth year of my anointment, this commandment is made! Everywhere in the conquered (provinces) among the faithful, whether (my own) subjects or foreigners, after every five years, let there be (a public) humiliation for this express object, yea, for the confirmation of virtue and for the suppression of disgraceful acts.

"Good and proper is dutiful service to mother and father;—towards friends and kinsfolks, towards Brahmans and Sramans excellent is charity:—prodigality and malicious slander are not good.

"All this the leader of the congregation shall inculcate to the assembly, with (appropriate) explanation and example."

TABLET IV.

Prof. Wilson's Translation.

During a past period of many centuries, there have prevailed destruction of life, injury of living beings, disrespect towards kindred, and irreverence towards Sramans and Brahmans. But now, in conformity to moral duty, the pious proclamation of King Priyadasi, the beloved of the gods, is made by beat of drum, in a manner never before performed for hundreds of years, with chariot and elephant processions, and fireworks, and other divine displays of the people exhibiting the ceremonies —(and this) for the promulgation of the law of King Priyadasi, &c., that non-destruction of life, non-injury to living beings, respect to relations, reverence of Brahmans and Sramans, and many other duties, do increase, and shall increase, and this moral law of the King Priyadasi, the sons, grandsons, and great-grandsons, of King Priyadasi shall maintain. Let the moral ordinance of King Priyadasi be stable as a mountain for the establishment of duty, for in these actions duty will be followed, as the law which directs ceremonial rites is not the observance of moral duties. It were well for every ill-conducted person to be atten-

Mr Prinsep's Translation.

"In times past, even for many hundred years, has been practised the sacrifice of living beings, the slaughter of animals, disregard of relations; and disrespect towards Brahmans and Sramans:—This day, by the messenger of the religion of the heaven-beloved King Piyadasi, (has been made) a proclamation by beat of drum, a grand announcement of religious grace, and a display of equipages, and a parade of elephants, and things to gratify the senses, and every other kind of heavenly object for the admiration of mankind, such as had never been for many hundred years such as were today exhibited.

"By the religious ordinance of the heaven-beloved King Piyadasi, the non-sacrifice of animals, the non-destruction of living beings, proper regard to kindred, respect to brahmans and sramans, dutiful service to father and mother, dutiful service to spiritual pastors:—through these and many other similar (good acts) doth religious grace abound; and thus moreover shall the heaven-beloved King Piyadasi cause religion to flourish: and the same shall the sons, the grandsons, and the great-grandsons of the heaventive to the object of this injunction. This is the edict (writing) of King Priyadasi. Let not any thought be entertained by the subject people of opposing the edict. This has been caused to be written by the King Priyadasi, in the twelfth year of his inauguration.

beloved King Piyadasi cause to abound exceedingly.

"As long as the mountains shall endure, so long in virtue, and in strict observances shall the religion stand fast. And through good acts of this nature, that is to say,—through these ordinances, and the strict practice of religion, laxness of discipline is obviated. Moreover in this object, it is proper to be intelligent, and nowise neglected. For the same purpose is this (edict) ordered to be written. Let all take heed to profit of this good object, and not to give utterance to objections.

"By the heaven-beloved King Piyadasi, after the twelfth year of his anointment is this caused to be written."

TABLET V.

Prof. Wilson's Translation.

The beloved of the gods King Priyadasi thus proclaims: who ever perverts good to evil will derive evil from good, therefore much good has been done by me, and my sons, and grandsons, and others my posterity (will) conform to it for every age. So they who shall imitate them shall enjoy happiness, and those who cause the path to be abandoned shall suffer misfortune. The chief ministers of morality have for an unprecedentedly long

Mr Prinsep's Translation.

"Thus spake the heaven-beloved King Piyadasi :—

"Prosperity (cometh) through adversity, and truly each man (to obtain) prosperity causeth himself present difficulty—therefore by me (nevertheless) has much prosperity been brought about, and therefore shall my sons, and my grandsons, and my latest posterity, as long as the very hills endure, pursue the same conduct; and so shall each meet time been tolerant of iniquity, therefore in the tenth year of the inauguration have ministers of morality been made, who are appointed for the purpose of presiding over morals among persons of all the religions for the sake of the augmentation of virtue, and for the happiness of the virtuous among the people of Kamboja, Gandhara, Naristaka, and Pitenika. They shall also be spread among the warriors, the Brahmans, the mendicants, the destitute, and others, without any obstruction, for the happiness of the well-disposed, in order to loosen the bonds of those who are bound, and liberate those who are confined, through the means of holy wisdom disseminated by pious teachers, and they will proceed to the outer cities and fastnesses of my brother and sister, and wherever are any other of my

his reward! While he, on the other hand, who shall neglect such conduct,—shall meet his punishment in the midst of the wicked [in the nethermost regions of hell].

"For a very long period of time there have been no ministers of religion properly so called. By myself, then, in this tenth year of mine anointment, are ministers of religion appointed;[2] who, intermingling among all unbelievers (may overwhelm them) with the inundation of religion, and with the abundance of the sacred doctrines. Through *Kam* (*bocha, gan*) *dhára*, *narástika*, *Petenika*, and elsewhere finding their way unto the uttermost limits of the barbarian countries, for the benefit and pleasure of (all classes) . . . . and for restraining the passions of the faithful and for the regeneration of those kindred: and the ministers of morals, those who are appointed as superintendents of morals, shall, wherever the moral law is established, give encouragement to the charitable, and those addicted to virtue. With this intent this edict is written, and let my people obey it.

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[2] The Cuttack version of the Fifth Tablet, from the star.

—who shall be intermingled with all the hundred grades of unbelievers for the establishment among them of the faith, for the increase of religion, and for their profit and gratification through the context of the sacred doctrines, in *Kambocha* and *Gandhára*, in *Surástrika* and *Pitenika*, ... and even to the furthest (limits) of the barbarian (countries). Who shall mix with the *Brahmans* and *Bhikshus*, with the poor and with the rich,—for their benefit and pleasure, to bring them unto the righteousness which passeth knowledge; and for those bound in the fetters (of sin) this new bond of precious knowledge is made for their final emancipation which is beyond understanding; and among the terrible and the powerful shall they be mixed both here and in foreign countries, in every town, and among all the kindred ties even of brotherhood and sisterhood, and others . . . . . everywhere! and here also having penetrated, for there is religious darkness (?) even in the very metropolis of religion, every question shall be asked among the charitable, and these being themselves absorbed in righteousness, shall become ministers of the faith(?). For this express reason is this religious edict promulgated; for ever more let my people pay attention thereto!

bound in the fetters (of sin?) . . . . are they appointed. Intermingling equally among the dreaded, and among the respected—both in *Pátaliputa* and in foreign places, teaching better things shall they everywhere penetrate; so that they even who (oppose the faith shall at length become) ministers of it."

TABLET VI.

Prof. Wilson's Translation.

The beloved of the gods, King Priyadasi, thus declares:—"An unprecedentedly long time has past since it has been the custom at all times, and in all affairs, to submit representations. Now it is established by me that whether at meals, in my palace, in the interior apartments, in discourse, in exchange of civility, in gardens, the officers appointed to make reports shall convey to me the objects of the people. I will always attend to the objects of the people, and whatever I declare verbally, whether punishment or reward, is further intrusted to the supervisors of morals (or eminent persons),—for that purpose let those who reside in the immediate vicinage even become informers at all times, and in all places, so it is ordained by me. The distribution of wealth which is to be

Mr Prinsep's Translation.

Thus spake PIYADASI, the heaven-beloved King!

"Never was there in any former period, a system of instruction applicable to every season, and to every action, such as that which is now established by me.

"For every season, for behaviour during meals, during repose, in domestic relations, in the nursery, in conversation, in general deportment, and on the bed of death, everywhere instructors (or *Pativedakas*) have been appointed. Accordingly do ye (instructors) deliver instruction in what concerneth my people.

"And everywhere in what concerneth my people do I myself perform whatsoever with my mouth I enjoin (unto them); whether it be by me (esteemed) disagreeable, or whether agreeable. Moreover, for their better made is designed by me for the benefit of all the world, for the distribution of wealth is the root of virtues. There is nothing more essential to the good of the world for which I am always labouring. Of the many beings over whom I rule I confer happiness in this world,—in the next they may obtain Swarga. With this view, this moral edict has been written; may it long endure, and may my sons, grandsons, and great-grandsons after me, continue with still greater exertion to labour for universal good."

welfare among them, an awarder of punishment is duly installed. On this account, assembling together those who are dwelling in the reputation of much wisdom, do ye meanwhile instruct them as to the substance of what is hereby ordained by me for all circumstances, and for all seasons. This is not done by me in any desire for the collection of worldly gain, but in the real intention that the benefit of my people shall be effected; whereof, moreover, this is the root, the good foundation, and the steady repose in all circumstances: there is not a more effectual mode of benefitting all mankind, than this on which I bestow my whole labour.

"But upon how many living beings (I will pass over the mention of other things) do I confer happiness here:—hereafter likewise, let them hope ardently for heaven! Amen!

"For this reason has the present religious edict been written:—May it endure for evermore; and so may my sons, and my grandsons, and my great-grandsons uphold the same for the profit of all the world, and labour therein with the most reverential exertion."

TABLET VII.

Prof. Wilson's Translation.

The beloved of the gods, the Raja Priyadarsi, desires that

Mr Prinsep's Translation.

"The heaven-beloved king Piyadasi everywhere ardently all unbelievers may everywhere dwell (unmolested), as they also wish for moral restraint and purity of disposition. For men are of various purposes and various desires, and they do injury to all or only to a part. Although, however, there should not be moral restraint or purity of disposition in any one, yet wherever there is great liberality (or charity), gratitude will acknowledge merit even in those who were before that reputed vile.

desireth that all unbelievers may be brought to repentance and peace of mind. He is anxious that every diversity of opinion, and every diversity of passion, may shine forth, blended into one system, and be conspicuous in undistinguishing charity! Unto no one can be repentance and peace of mind until he hath attained supreme knowledge, perfect faith which surmounteth all obstacles, and perpetual assent."

TABLET VIII.

Prof. Wilson's Translation.

In past times kings were addicted to travelling about, to companions, to going abroad, to hunting and similar amusements, but Piyadasi, the beloved of the gods, having been ten years inaugurated, by him easily awakened, that moral festival is adopted, (which consists) in seeing and bestowing gifts on Brahmanas and Sramanas, in seeing and giving gold to elders, and overseeing the country and the people; the institution of moral laws and the investigation of morals; such are the devices for the removal of apprehension, and such are the different pursuits of the favourite of the gods, King Piyadasi.

Mr Prinsep's Translation.

"In ancient times, festivals for the amusement of sovereigns consisted of gambling, hunting the deer (or antelope), and other exhilarating pleasures of the same nature. But the heaven-beloved King Piyadasi, having attained the tenth year of his anointment, for the happiness of the wise hath a festival of religion (been substituted):—and this same consists in visits to Brahmans and Sramans, and in alms-giving, and in visits to the reverend and aged; and the liberal distribution of gold, the contemplation of the Universe and its inhabitants, obeying the precepts of religion, and settling religion before all other things, are the expedients (he employs for amusement), and these will become an enjoyment without alloy to the heaven-beloved King PIYADASI in another existence."

TABLET IX.

Prof. Wilson's Translation.

The beloved of the gods Piyadasi Raja, thus says: Every man that is, celebrates various occasions of festivity; as on the removal of encumbrances, on invitations, on marriages, on the birth of a son, or on setting forth on a journey; on these and other occasions a man makes various rejoicings. The benevolent man, also, celebrates many and various kinds of pure and disinterested festivities, and such rejoicing is to be practised. Such festivities are fruitless and vain, but the festivity that bears great fruit, is the festival of duty, such as the respect of the servant to his master; reverence for holy teachers is good, tenderness for living creatures is good, liberality to Brahmans and Sramanas is good. These and other such acts constitute verily the festival of duty, and it is to be cherished as a father by a son, a dependant by his master. This is good, this is the festival to be observed, for the establishment of this object virtuous donations are made, for there is no such donation or benevolence as the gift of duty, or the benevolence

Mr Prinsep's Translation.

"Thus spake King PIYADASI, beloved of the gods!

"Each individual seeketh his own happiness in a diversity of ways: in the bonds of affection, —in marriage, or otherwise,—in the rearing of offspring,—in foreign travel:—in these and other similar objects, doth man provide happiness of every degree. But there is great ruination, excessive of all kinds, when (a man) maketh worldly objects his happiness. On the contrary, this is what is to be done,—(for most certainly that species of happiness is a fruitless happiness,)—to obtain the happiness which yieldeth plentiful fruit, even the happiness of virtue; that is to say:—kindness to dependents, reverence to spiritual teachers are proper; humanity to animals is proper: all these acts, and others of the same kind, are to be rightly denominated the happiness of virtue!

"By father, and by son, and by brother; by master, (and by servant) it is proper that these things should be entitled happiness. And further, for the more complete attainment of this obof duty, that (benevolence) is chaff, (which is contracted) with a friend, a companion, a kinsman, or an associate, and is to be reprehended. In such and such manner this is to be done; this is good; with these means let a man seek Swarga, this is to be done, by these means it is to be done, as by them Swarga has been gained.

ject, secret charity is most suitable:—yea, there is no alms and no loving kindness comparable with the alms of religion, and the loving kindness of religion, which ought verily to be upheld alike by the friend, by the good-hearted, by kinsman and neighbour, in the entire fulfilment of pleasing duties.

"This is what is to be done: this is what is good. With those things let each man propitiate heaven. And how much ought (not) to be done in order to the propitiation of heaven?"

TABLET X.

Prof. Wilson's Translation.

The beloved of the gods, the Prince Piyadasi, does not esteem glory and fame as of great value, and besides for a long time it has been my fame and that of my people, that the observance of moral duty and the service of the virtuous should be practised, for this is to be done. This is the fame that the beloved of the gods desires, and inasmuch as the beloved of the gods excels, (he holds) all such reputation as no real reputation, but such as may be that of the unrighteous, pain and chaff; for it may be acquired by crafty and unworthy persons, and by whatever further effort it is acquired, it is worthless and a source of pain.

Mr Prinsep's Translation.

"The heaven-beloved King Piyadasi doth not deem that glory and reputation (are) the things of chief importance; on the contrary (only for the prevention of sin) and for enforcing conformity among a people praiseworthy for following the four rules of virtue, and pious, doth the heaven-beloved King Piyadasi desire glory and reputation in this world, and whatsoever the heaven-beloved King Piyadasi chiefly displayeth heroism in obtaining, that is all (connected with) the other world.

"For in everything connected with his immortality, there is as regards mortal things in general discredit? Let this be discriminated with encouragement or with abandonment, with honour or with the most respectful force, and every difficulty connected with futurity shall with equal reverence be vanquished."

TABLET XI.

Prof. Wilson's Translation.

Thus says the beloved of the gods King Priyadasi: There is no gift like the gift of virtue, whether it be the praise of virtue, the apportionment of virtue, or relationship of virtue. This (gift) is the cherishing of slaves and dependents, pious devotion to mother and father, generous gifts to friends and kinsmen, Brahmanas and Sramanas: and the non-injury of living beings is good. In this manner, it is to be lived by father and son, and brother, and friend, and friend's friend (?), and by a master (of slaves), and by neighbours. This is good, this is to be practised, and thus having acted, there is happiness in worldly existence, and hereafter great holiness is obtained by this gift of virtue.

Mr Prinsep's Translation.

"Thus spake Piyadasi, the king beloved of the gods!—

"There is no such charity as the charity which springeth from virtue,—(which is) the intimate knowledge of virtue, the inheritance of virtue, the close union with virtue! And in these maxims it is manifested:—'kindness towards servants and hirelings; towards mother and father, dutiful service is proper: towards a friend's offspring, to kindred in general, to Brahmans and Sramans, almsgiving is proper: avoiding the destruction of animal life is proper.'

"And this (saying) should be equally repeated by father and son, (?) by the hireling, and even so by neighbours in general!

"This is excellent—and this is what ought to be done!

"And whoso doeth thus is blessed of the inhabitants of this world: and in the next world endless moral merit resulteth from such religious charity."

TABLET XII.

Proj. Wilson's Translation.

The beloved of the gods King Priyadasi, honours all forms of religious faith, whether professed by ascetics or householders ; he honours them with gifts and with manifold kinds of reverence ; but the beloved of the gods considers no gift or honour so much as the increase of the substance (of religion) : his encouragement of the increase of the substance of all religious belief is manifold. But the root of his (encouragement) is this : reverence for one's own faith, and no reviling nor injury of that of others. Let the reverence be shown in such and such a manner as is suited to the difference of belief ; as when it is done in that manner it augments our own faith and benefits that of others. Who ever acts otherwise injures his own religion and wrongs that of others, for he who in some way honours his own religion and reviles that of others, saying, having extended to all our own belief, let us make it famous, he who does this throws difficulties in the way of his own religion : this, his conduct, cannot be right. The duty of a person consists in respect and service of others. Such is the wish of

Mr Prinsep's Translation.

"The heaven-beloved King Piyadasi propitiateth all unbelievers, both of the ascetic and of the domestic classes ; by charitable offerings, and by every species of puja doth he (strive to) propitiate them. Not that the beloved of the gods deemeth offerings or prayers to be of the same (value) with true glory. The promotion of his own salvation promoted in many ways, the salvation of all unbelievers . . . . . . of which indeed this is the root, and the whole substance.

"Again, the propitiation of the converted heretic, and the reproof of the unconverted heretic must not be (effected) by harsh treatment : but let those who enter into discussion (conciliate them) by restraint of their own passions, and by their mild address. By such and such conciliatory demeanour shall even the unconverted heretics be propitiated. And such conduct increaseth the number of converted heretics, while it disposeth of the unconverted heretic, and effecteth a revolution of opinion in him. And (he) encourageth the converted heretic, while he disposeth completely of the unconverted heretic, whoso-the beloved of the gods; for in all forms of religion there may be many scriptures (Sutras) and many holy texts which are to be thereafter followed through my protection. The beloved of the gods considers no gift or reverence to be equal to the increase of the essence of religion; and as this is the object of all religions, with a view to its dissemination, superintendents of moral duty as well as over women, and officers of compassion as well as other officers (are appointed), and the fruit of this (regulation) will be the augmentation of our own faith, and the lustre of moral duty.

ever propitiateth the converted heretic, or reproveth the unconverted heretic, by the pecuniary support of the converted heretic. And whoso, again, doth so, he purifieth in the most effectual manner the heretic; and of himself such an act is his very breath, and his well-being.

"Moreover, 'hear ye the religion of the faithful and attend thereto:' even such is the desire, the act, the hope of the beloved of the gods, that all unbelievers may speedily be purified, and brought into contentment speedily.

"Furthermore from place to place this most gracious sentiment should be repeated: 'The beloved of the gods doth not esteem either charitable offering or puja, as comparable with true glory. The increase of blessing to himself is as much (importance) to all unbelievers.'

"For this purpose have been spread abroad ministers of religion possessing fortitude of mind, and practices of every virtue: may the various congregations co-operate (with them) for the accomplishment thereof. For the increase of converts is indeed the lustre of religion."

TABLET XIII.

Mr Prinsep's Translation.

"...... Whose equality, and exertion towards that object, exceeding activity, judicious conduct ...... afterwards in the *Kalinga* provinces not to be obtained by wealth . . . . . . the decline of religion, murder, and death, and unrestrained license of mankind; when flourished the (precious maxims) of *Devánampiyo*, comprising the essence of learning and of science:—dutiful service to mother and father; dutiful service to spiritual teachers; the love of friend and child; (charity) to kinsfolk, to servants (to Brahmans and Sramans, &c., which) cleanse away the calamities of generations: further also in these things unceasing perseverance is fame. There is not in either class of the heretics of men, not, so to say, a procedure marked by such grace, ... nor so glorious nor friendly, nor even so extremely liberal, as *Devánampiyo's* injunction for the non-injury, and content of living creatures . . . . . . and the Greek King besides, by whom the Kings of Egypt, PTOLEMAIOS and ANTIGONOS,(?) and MAGAS, ... both here and in foreign (countries), everywhere the religious ordinances of *Devánampiyo* effect conversion, wherever they go; . . . . . . conquest is of every description: but further the conquest which bringeth joy springing from pleasant emotions, becometh joy itself: the victory of virtue is happiness: the victory of happiness is not to be overcome, that which essentially possesses a pledge of happiness,—such victory is desired in things of this world and things of the next world!

"And this place is named the WHITE ELEPHANT, conferring pleasure on all the world."

TABLET XIV.

Mr Prinsep's Translation.

"This religious edict is caused to be written by the heaven-beloved king Piyadasi. It is (partly) (written) with abridgment; it is (partly) with ordinary extent; and it is (partly) with amplification: not incoherent (or disjointed), but throughout continuous (and united), it is powerful in overcoming the wise; and it is much written and caused to be written, yet it is always but the same thing repeated over and over again. For the persuasive eloquence which is lavished on each separate subject shall man the rather render obedience thereunto!

"Furthermore, at one time even unto the conclusion is this written, incomparable in manner, and conformable with the copy, by Relachepu, the scribe and pandit."

Translation of the Bhabra Inscription, by Professor Wilson.

Piyadasi, the King, to the venerable Assembly of Magadha, commands the infliction of little pain and indulgence to animals.

It is verily, however, I proclaim, to what extent my respect and favour (are placed) in Buddha, and in the Law, and in the Assembly.

Whatsoever (words) have been spoken by the divine Buddha, they have all been well said, and in them verily I declare that capability of proof is discovered; so that the pure law (which they teach) will be of long duration, as far as I am worthy (of being obeyed).

For these I declare are the precepts of the Law of the principle discipline (Vináya), having overcome the oppressions of the Aryas and future perils, (and refuted) the songs of the Munis, the Sútras of the Munis, (the practices) of inferior ascetics, the censure of a light world, and (all) false doctrines.

These things, as declared by the divine Buddha, I proclaim, and I desire them to be regarded as the precepts of the Law.

And that as many as there may be, male and female mendicants, may hear and observe them, as well also as male and female followers (of the laity).

These things I affirm, and have caused this to be written (to make known to you) that such will be my intention.

APPENDIX II.

BUDDHIST CHRONICLES.

The Buddhist Chronicle, known as the Maháwanso, comprises all the historical data at present available respecting the ancient kingdom of Magadha, excepting what has been deduced from Greek writers. It is prefaced by some genealogical matter, which is apparently of small importance. It really commences with the accepted date of the death of Gótama Buddha in B.C. 543; and is brought to a conclusion, as far as Magadha is concerned, at the death of Asoka in B.C. 288.[1] According to tradition, the chronicles of Magadha, together with the Buddhist scriptures generally, were carried from Magadha to Ceylon about three centuries before Christ, by Mahinda, the son of Asoka, and were translated by him from Páli into Singhalese. Seven centuries afterwards, namely, in the fifth century of the Christian era, Mahánáma, an uncle of the reigning king of Ceylon, compiled the Maháwanso, or "great genealogies," from the materials then in existence, which may have included those brought by Mahinda. About the same time Buddaghosa, a Buddhist monk of Burma, proceeded to Ceylon, and procured copies of the Buddhist chronicle and scriptures, and carried them back to his own country.[2] The subject matter of the chronicles compiled by Mahánáma and Buddhaghosa are nearly identical. There may be some slight discrepancies as regards the dates of particular reigns, but in all essentials the story is the same.

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[1] This is the date fixed in the Maháwanso calculating from the era commencing with the death of Gótama. Some scholars have assumed that there is a mistake of sixty years, because it was not Asoka who was a contemporary of Alexander of Macedon, but Chandragupta (i. e. Sandrokottos) the grandfather of Asoka. As, however, it is just possible that Chandragupta and Asoka are one and the same person, there seems no reason for the forcible introduction of a period of sixty years into the chronicle.

[2] The original Páli text of the Maháwanso, with an English translation and an Introductory Essay, was published by the Hon. George Turnour. Quarto. Ceylon, 1837. The most important portion of the commentary of Buddhaghosa

The century in which Mahánáma and Buddhaghosa compiled their chronicles is of considerable importance in the history of Buddhism. The great expansion of Buddhism in the reign of Asoka and his successors had been followed by a re-action. Whilst Buddhaghosa was proceeding from Burma to Ceylon, Fah-Hian and other pilgrims were making their way from China to India to collect similar copies of the sacred books for the edification of the Chinese. It may therefore be inferred that in the fifth century of the Christian era the spirit of reform was abroad in the Buddhist world, having for its object the re-establishment of a purer doctrine and discipline by a reference to more authentic copies of the law.

As regards the sacred books or scriptures of the Buddhists, some information has already been exhibited in the form of notes, but it may be convenient, for the sake of reference, to briefly indicate their character in the present place. The canon of the Buddhists is known as the Tri-pitaka, or three baskets. The first basket contains the books on Vinaya, or discipline. The second basket contains the Sútras or discourses of Buddha, which comprise both religion and morality, and are called Dharma, or the law. The third basket comprises Buddhist metaphysics, and is known as Abidharma, or by-law.

The Buddhist chronicles, which form more immediately the subject of the present essay, may be considered under three heads, namely: the reign of Asoka; the three Synods; and the chronicles of Magadha generally from the death of Gótama Buddha to the death of Asoka.

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is incorporated in the "Life or Legend of Gaudama," by Bishop Bigaudet. Rangoon, 1866. Professor Max Müller has reviewed the literary history of these chronicles in "Chips from a German Workshop," vol. i.; and in his Introduction to Buddhaghosa's Parables. The object of the present essay is simply to ascertain by a critical analysis how far the data embodied in the chronicle may be regarded as historical.

I. REIGN OF ASOKA, B.C. 325 to 288.

The most salient portion of the Buddhist chronicles is that which refers to the reign of Asoka. Indeed if there is any period respecting which a Buddhist annalist would be desirous of furnishing the fullest and most authentic details, it would be the reign of this particular sovereign. Asoka was the reputed grandson of Sandrokottos or Chandragupta. He was the hero saint of Buddhist tradition.[3] He is generally identified with Raja Priyadarsi, and this identification may be accepted, for the measures which are recorded in the chronicles bear a grotesque resemblance to those which were promulgated in the edicts. So far, then, the monkish compiler must have been familiar with the leading events recorded in the edicts. Consequently a comparison of the chronicles with the edicts ought to dispose of their claim to be believed.

The most striking event in the edicts, and the one most likely to be preserved in tradition, was the proclamation against the slaughter of animals for food or sacrifice. It affected the daily lives and established usages of millions, whilst it was attended with a pomp and ceremony which were calculated to create a lasting impression. But the episode of the death of Gótama Buddha from eating too much roast pork, plainly indicates that in the age in which the Buddhist scriptures were compiled such an authoritative prohibition as that involved in the great proclamation would be regarded with disfavour; and that attempts would be made to weaken its force, or disguise it altogether.[4] Accordingly the compiler of the Buddhist chronicle refers to the proclamation recorded in the edict, but ascribes it to another and a very different origin. Asoka, it is said, had ordered eighty-four thousand viháras or monasteries to be constructed as a memorial of Gótama Buddha's sermons, which are said to have been the same in number. After three years these viharas were all completed at the same time; and despatches were received by the Rajas on the same day from eighty-four thousand different cities, on announcing the happy consummation. Asoka is said to have been so overjoyed at these glad tidings that he at once proclaimed a great festival throughout the empire, which was to be celebrated with extraordinary pomp and rejoicings, and at which the people were to present alms and offerings to the priesthood to the utmost of their means.[5] It is impossible to say how far this legend may be referred to Asoka. A description of the cultivation of the field of happiness at Prayága seems to have been grafted on to the myth;[6] and the whole account is so confused and garbled as to be utterly unreliable.

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[3] The term "reputed grandson" is here used advisedly. It will appear hereafter that there is reason to believe that the names Sandrokottos and Asoka are applied to the same individual.

[4] See *ante*, page 142.

Another important edict was the one which provided medical attendance for all sick persons and animals. This again has been manipulated into a pious fable by the priestly selfishness of the compiler. Asoka is said to have been informed that a holy monk had died from lack of medicine. In his deep sorrow he caused four great reservoirs to be constructed, one at each of the four gates of the city; and ordered them to be filled with medicine, saying:—"Let medicines be furnished every day for the priesthood."[7] Here again the legend is so monstrous, that it may be dismissed without any further consideration.

The most interesting event, however, to the modern reader is a statement in the Buddhist chronicles that Asoka sent out numerous missionary monks to preach the religion of Buddha to the surrounding countries; and it is a relief to find a legend which bears an element of authenticity. Indeed this reference to Buddhist missionary operations approximates more nearly to the truth than any other which is recorded in these annals. The names of the missionaries are given, but it would be useless to repeat them, as they would convey no ideas, nor awaken any associations, and they moreover bear an appearance of being mythical. The countries to which they were sent, however, are distinctly specified, and are more authentic. They include Cashmere, Rajpootana, Maharashtra, the Græco-Bactrian empire of Antiochus in the north-west, the Thibetan or Himalayan region, the eastern or golden peninsula comprehending Burma and Siam, and the remote island of Ceylon. These missionary operations are said to have been very successful, especially amongst the Nága people; and the number of converts are given, who are divided into the two classes of laity and priesthood.[8] To crown all, the relics of two of the missionaries who laboured in the Himalayan region have been found by General Cunningham in a Buddhist tope at Sanchi, enshrined in a casket which bears their names.[9] Other data might be quoted from perfectly independent sources to prove that these missions were actually undertaken.

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[5] Compare Maháwanso, chap. v.

[6] See *ante*, page 275.

[7] Maháwanso, chap. v., page 37.

Unfortunately the religious opinions of Asoka are grossly perverted in the Buddhist chronicles. The tolerant Raja of the edicts, who propitiated both Bráhmans and Srámans in order to reconcile them to the spread of Dharma, is represented in the chronicles as the bitter persecutor of the Bráhmans, and the liberal patron of the Srámans. According to the chronicles, Asoka was originally a follower of the Brahmanical religion. Like his reputed father Vindusara, he maintained sixty thousand Bráhmans, and gave them daily doles of food at his palace. Subsequently he turned them adrift, and entertained sixty thousand Buddhists in their room. The discarded Bráhmans disguised themselves as Buddhists monks, and obtained admission into the Buddhist viháras. Here, however, they spread so much heresy, that the Buddhist monks refused to perform their religious ceremonies in the company of such heretics. An antagonism thus arose between the Bráhman and Buddhist priests which

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[8] Maháwanso, chap. xii.

[9] Bhilsa Topes, p. 119, *et seq.* Relics, however, are not generally admitted as proof in this sceptical age; and there is nothing to show that the relics of the Himalayan missionaries were not fabricated in a later age of intense monasticism.

Asoka tried to suppress. He sent his minister to settle the dispute; but this led to a serious fray. The minister ordered the Buddhist monks to resume their religious duties; and when they refused, he drew his sword and several of the holy men were slain.

This account demands careful consideration. There is an element of historical truth even in the distortion of the facts. The edicts prove that Asoka was no persecutor of the Bráhmans; but they also prove that he was no friend to either of the priestly orders. The incident recorded in the chronicles respecting the action of his minister thus seems to reveal a serious collision between the Raja and the priesthood generally, which is hushed up by the monkish chronicle. The blame is thrown upon the "ignorant minister," who had misunderstood the orders of the sovereign, and endeavoured to suppress the quarrel by force of arms, when he was only expected to investigate the claims of the conflicting parties. Asoka is said to have been in an agony of terror at his share in the slaughter of priests; but to have been at length relieved by a holy monk, who assured him that if the sacrilegious murders had been committed without his intention he had committed no sin. The story thus bears some resemblance to that of Thomas à Becket; and the remorse of Asoka may be likened to that of Henry II.[10]

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[10] Maháwanso, chap. v.

Further light will be thrown hereafter upon this incident by a consideration of the tradition of the third synod. There is a difficulty, however, in ascertaining the true period when the sectarian differences between the Bráhmans and Buddhists found expression in a violent antagonism. The Greek writers seem to indicate such an opposition, and do not blame the Bráhmans so much as their opponents. (Compare Strabo, India, sects. 59, 70.) The philosophers who were opposed to the Bráhmans, were called Pramnæ. These Pramnæ were a contentious people fond of argument. They ridiculed the Bráhmans as boasters and fools for occupying themselves with physiology and astronomy. The Pramnæ of the mountains wore deer-skins, and carried scrips filled with roots and drugs; they professed to practise medicine by means of incantations, charms, and amulets.

The Buddhist monks in Burma do not appear to practise astrology, which indeed is contrary to their religion. But there are Bráhmans who profess astrology, and these men were often consulted by the king of Burma. Possibly the Pramnæ of the mountains were a tribe now extinct of medical Srámans.

There is no trace of any religious antagonism between Bráhmans and Buddhists

II. THE THREE SYNODS.

The Buddhist chronicles of the Rajas of Magadha are not confined to the reign of Asoka. They profess to furnish historical data of the whole period from the death of Buddha to the death of Asoka, that is, from B.C. 543 to 288, comprising an interval of 255 years.[11] Their peculiar character may be inferred from the fact that the so-called annals mainly refer to three leading events, known as the three Synods or Convocations of Buddhist priests. These Synods are of small interest in dealing with political history, but they are regarded as of paramount importance in connection with religious history. They are alleged to have been convened at different intervals in order to maintain the authority of the canon of Buddhist scriptures, and check the efforts of heretics and schismatics to deviate from such authority. The annals are thus subordinate to the Synods, and are little better than framework by which the Synods are placed in chronological order. The first Synod was held in the year after Buddha's death, when Ajata-satru the parricide was Raja of Magadha. The second Synod was held exactly one hundred years afterwards, when a Raja named Kal-Asoka was reigning over Magadha. The third Synod was held in B.C. 309, or 234 years after the death of Buddha, when the celebrated Asoka was Raja of Magadha. Accordingly it may be advisable in the first instance to review the traditionary history of these Synods; and then to ascertain if any reliable data can be drawn from the remaining portion of the chronicles.

The first Synod is thus described:—"When Gótama

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in the edicts, nor in the Hindú drama; but, as already shown, it finds expression in the Hindú epics, as well as in the Buddhist chronicles. It probably reached a climax in the early centuries of the Christian era.

[11] The Buddhist chronicles follow the Buddhist era, which commences with the year of Buddha's death. In the text it is adjusted to the Christian era; but it will be seen hereafter that the whole chronology prior to the reign of Asoka is wholly unreliable.

Buddha had entered Nirvána, Kasyapa the Bráhman hastened to the spot, and performed the funeral ceremonies, and distributed the relics.[12] At this time Kasyapa heard an aged monk rejoicing over the departure of Gótama, because henceforth the priesthood would cease to be troubled as to what was allowable and what was not allowable. Kasyapa was shocked at this disaffection, and determined to stop its further progress by holding a Convocation in the city of Rajagriha. Accordingly he selected five hundred monks to assemble together at the next religious season;[13] and he also chose two disciples who were to declare before the whole Convocation what was Vinaya, and what was Dharma.[14]

"And it was told to Ajata-satru that the Convocation would be held at Rajagriha. So he built a splendid hall, and laid down five hundred carpets for the monks; and he set up a throne on one side for the high priest Kasyapa, and a pulpit in the centre for the two disciples to occupy in turn. When all had taken their seats Upáli ascended the pulpit, and was questioned by Kasyapa as to the Vinaya, precept by precept. Meantime the assembly of five hundred chanted the Vinaya, passage by passage, until they had learnt the whole. When Upáli had finished Ananda took his place, and was questioned by Kasyapa as to the Dharma; whilst the assembly chanted every passage, until they all knew it by heart as they had known the Vinaya. This Convocation lasted seven months, and was then brought to a close by Kasyapa, who declared that the religion of Gótama Buddha would last five thousand years."[15]

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[12] This has been already related. See *ante*, page 143, *note*.

[13] The religious season has been called the Buddhist Lent. It lasted during the rains.

[14] The terms Vinaya and Dharma are the key to Buddhism. Vinaya was the religion of the priesthood; Dharma was the religion of the masses or laity. Vinaya was supposed to comprise the precepts of monastic discipline which Buddha imparted to his disciples. Dharma was supposed to comprise the sermons or discourses which Buddha preached to the multitude, and which are known as Sutras. Thus the religion of the heart, which Raja Priyadarsi promulgated by means of his edicts, was known as Dharma. Whether the edicts were the result of the discourses, or the so-called discourses were a further development of the edicts, must be a vexed question.

In modern Buddhism Dharma means something more than the religion of the laity. A number of metaphysical discourses and speculations are added under the name of Abidharma. Accordingly the sacred canon of the Buddhist scriptures is known as the Tri-pitaka, or three baskets. It comprises the three classes of documents:—(1) The Vinaya, or rules of discipline. (2) The Sutras, or religious discourses of Buddha. (3) The Abidharma, or metaphysics and philosophy. The Abidharma is not mentioned in the Maháwanso, and was doubtless a later composition. The Buddhist monks explain that Abidharma is a part of Dharma.

It is stated in the chronicle that Upáli recited the Vinaya, or rather replied to all the questions of Kasyapa respecting it. In like manner Ananda replied to the questions respecting Dharma. Both Upáli and Ananda were disciples of Buddha during his life-time, and are supposed to have known his teachings by heart.

The details of the first Synod are certainly surrounded with an air of unreality. It seems scarcely credible that the canon of Buddhist scripture should have been established so very shortly after the death of Buddha. It seems still less credible that it should have been accepted unanimously, without opposition or controversy of any kind, by a body of Buddhist monks who have been notorious for their disputatious and wrangling disposition from the days of Megasthenes downwards. The details are not drawn from any knowledge of public life, but from the narrow and petty experiences of the monastery. The assumed origin of the Synod is essentially a monastic idea. A crabbed old monk is supposed to have been impatient of priestly discipline, and to have pined for some petty indulgences which were contrary to the rules. The proceedings which followed are most suspicious. They are strained and artificial. They bear no resemblance to any Convocation or Council, of which any historical record has been preserved. The settlement of a canon of scriptures by question and answer, whilst five hundred monks committed all the texts to heart, is the clumsy invention of a monk who has played the part of schoolmaster. To this day the Burmese boys in a Buddhist school learn their lessons in the same chanting fashion as that described in the Maháwanso. It is thus impossible to treat the account of the first Synod otherwise than as a myth, framed several centuries after the death of Buddha, for the purpose of investing the existing body of Buddhist scriptures with the highest authority.

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[15] Maháwanso, chap. iii., page 11. A profound belief in the truth of this prophecy still prevails in the world of Buddhism.

The details of the second Synod are of the same puerile character. One hundred years after the first Synod, a body of monks claimed ten indulgences, some of them so absurd that it is easier to believe that they were the invention of some later compiler than to accept them as the actual basis of a formidable heresy. However, a Convocation of seven hundred monks is said to have been held in the tenth year of a Raja named Kal Asoka, for the purpose of suppressing it. Ten thousand heretic monks were degraded for insisting on the indulgences; and the whole canon of scriptures was recited and chanted as before. This Synod lasted eight months.[16]

The third Synod was held at the famous capital of Patali-putra, in the seventeenth year of the reign of Asoka, corresponding to the year B.C. 308 or 309. It was composed of a thousand monks, and is said to have lasted nine months. The details are somewhat confused, by being mixed up with the story of the sixty thousand Bráhmans, who were turned adrift by Asoka. This sovereign is said to have summoned all the priests in the universe to his great pagoda. There, in association with a holy monk, he interrogated each one in turn; those who expressed orthodox sentiments were passed on; those who gave heretical replies were expelled from the priesthood.[17] The third Synod of a thousand priests was then held; the Vinaya and Dharma were recited and chanted as on previous occasions; and the holy monk who presided over the Convocation then brought the proceedings to a close, by preaching a discourse on the means of suppressing doubts on points of faith.[18]

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[16] Mahâwanso, chap. iv., page 15. The story of this second Synod might have passed over in silence, had it not been accepted by some modern writers as historically true. Its character may be gathered from the following account of the so-called heresy:—

"When Kal Asoka was Raja of Magadha the shameless monks of Vaisali asserted that ten indulgences were lawful. They declared that a priest might keep salt for any length of time, instead of for only seven days as prescribed by Sákya Muni; that he might eat food after the sun had gone down two inches, instead of eating nothing after noon as prescribed by Sákya Muni; that whilst abroad in the villages he might partake of indulgences that were forbidden in the monastery; that he might perform religious ceremonies in his own house instead of being required to do so in the public hall; that he might commit any act provided he subsequently obtained consent, whereas the consent should always precede the act; that he might commit any forbidden thing, provided that his superiors had set the example; that he might drink whey after mid-day, indulge in fermented toddy, use a seat covered with cloth, and accept gold and silver as alms, although all four things had been expressly forbidden." Comment upon such puerilities is wholly unnecessary.

It was immediately after this Synod that the missionaries were sent abroad, as already noticed, to preach the religion of Buddha.

It is difficult to arrive at the origin of these conceptions of ecclesiastical Synods. The idea of holding a Synod for free discussion is familiar to European forms of thought; although, as already seen, it has never been realized in the lifeless mode described in the Buddhist chronicles. The Asiatic, however, cannot conceive of a free discussion in religious matters. If two parties dispute a question, one must be right and the other wrong; and the one who gains the victory must be universally accepted, whilst the one who is defeated must be universally condemned. The Asiatic can only conceive of a paramount authority to decide between the two; to prescribe what is orthodox, and to reject what is heterodox; and it is this conception of an over-ruling authority, so foreign to the idea of a free discussion, which finds expression in the Buddhist chronicles. The Synod was ostensibly convened to settle the canon of scripture, and yet there was no discussion. The president ascertained what was Vinaya and what was Dharma; and the result was unanimously accepted by the whole Convocation without a murmur.

Perhaps some clue to these Synods may be found in the statement of Megasthenes that king Sandrokottos held a Great Assembly at the commencement of every year, for the purpose of considering the various measures that were proposed for the improvement of the earth and its productions, or for the benefit of the State. It may also be inferred that some of the measures of Raja Priyadarsi, such as the introduction of medical establishments, and establishment of popular instruction, may have been debated at these Assemblies. But the monkish compilers of the third and fourth centuries of the Christian era appear to have belonged to a lazy and degenerate community; and are thus open to the charge of having falsified the chronicles for the purpose of concealing the practical philanthropy which prevailed in the reign of Asoka, and of representing their order as the special favourites of the pious and illustrious Raja.

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[17] These questions were alleged to have been put in a round-about way which is customary amongst Asiatics. The priests were not directly asked respecting their individual views, but as to what doctrine was taught by Buddha. If they asserted that Buddha taught a doctrine which was heterodox, they were expelled; if they asserted that he taught a doctrine that was orthodox, they were passed on.

[18] Mahâwanso, chap. v., page 41.

III. CHRONICLES OF MAGADHA, B.C. 543 TO 288.

Apart from these so-called Synods, the Buddhist chronicles, from the death of Buddha in B.C. 543, to the accession of Asoka in B.C. 325, might be dismissed as a monkish jumble of myths and names. In the so-called annals there are only five Rajas of Magadha, who appear as representatives of particular dynasties; and they are the only sovereigns who appear to have the slightest claim to be regarded as historical personages. Their names are as follows:—

1. Ajata-satru the parricide, who was reigning when Buddha died, and also when the first Synod was held.
2. Saisu-naga the serpent-worshipper, and father of that Kal Asoka, who was reigning when the second Synod was held.
3. Nanda the freebooter.
4. Chandra-gupta the cowherd.
5. Asoka, or Priyadarsi.

Ajata-satru is chiefly famous for having murdered his father. Three Rajas are said to have reigned after him, but nothing is recorded respecting them beyond the years of their reigns, and the bare statement that each in turn murdered his father. Thus a dynasty was created or invented known as the parricide dynasty. In Buddhist chronicles it occupies a period of half a century; in reality it is nothing more than the reign of Ajata-satru repeated over and over again. The four next sovereigns, who are supposed, more or less, to represent dynasties, may be really resolved into one man. In the case of the three first the legitimacy is said to be doubtful. The mother of each of the three is represented as of dubious origin, or low caste. Probably the mother of Asoka would have been degraded in the same way, only that it was deemed expedient to exalt him as a Buddhist hero.[19] Each of the four Rajas is said to have acquired the throne by force. The Buddhist chronicle gives the years of their respective reigns, and also the years of the reigns of certain intermediate Rajas; but otherwise the so-called annals of all these dynasties are as bare of real events as the annals of the parricides.[20]

The Greek accounts of Aggrammes and Sandrokottos furnish the only clue to the real history. According to the Greek story already related, Aggrammes was reigning at Patali-putra when Alexander invaded the Punjab. He is said to have been an illegitimate usurper. He was born of the queen, but his father was not the reigning Raja, but a barber who was a paramour of the queen. The reigning Raja was put to death by the barber, and Aggrammes obtained the throne. This story in its main outline corresponds with that of Ajata-satru. According to the Buddhist chronicles, Ajata-satru had been instigated by the shaven priest Devadatta to murder his father Vimbasara, Raja of Magadha, and ascend the throne. Thus Ajata-satru is resolved into Aggrammes; and the amorous barber into the shaven priest Devadatta. A padding of two centuries is then inserted between Ajata-satru and Asoka. Its object is unknown, but it is evident that a jumble of names of mythical Rajas and stories of mythical Synods has been engrafted in the chronicle.[21] Thus Sandrokottos appears in Greek story as having made his appearance in the Punjab as a contemporary of Alexander and Aggrammes. He is said to have had an interview with Alexander, but ultimately made his escape. Subsequently he re-appears in the Punjab and expels the Greeks, and becomes Raja of Magadha. He is the ally of the Græco-Bactrian kings, and husband of the daughter of Seleukos Nikator. Thus the story of Sandrokottos also agrees in the main with that of Asoka. According to the Buddhist chronicle, Asoka was appointed when very young to be governor or viceroy of Ujain in the remote territory of Malwa. Whilst here he was ordered to subdue a revolt which had broken out in the Punjab; in other words, he expelled the Greeks from Taxila. He ultimately obtained possession of the Magadha kingdom, but his further proceedings have been perverted into religious myths. Curiously enough the Buddhist chronicle states that in his old age he lost his queen, and then raised her attendant, a vain and malicious creature, to the dignity of queen consort.[22] Whether this incident refers to the marriage of Sandrokottos to a Greek wife can only be matter of conjecture; but if it was Asoka who married the Greek lady, the event would in all probability be recorded much after the fashion in which it appears in the Buddhist chronicle.

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[19] There is something wrong about Asoka. In the commentaries translated by Mr Turnour (see Introduction to the Maháwanso) Asoka is said to have been on bad terms with his father, Vindusura, who was afraid of being murdered by him. This idea would bring Asoka in somewhat close association with Ajata-satru.

[20] In the commentaries on the Buddhist chronicles, which are translated in Mr Turnour's Introduction to the Mahawanso, and also in Bishop Bigandet's legend of the life of Gótama Buddha, there are a number of tedious myths relating to some of these Rajas, which defy every attempt at interpretation, and yet seem to refer to real revolutions in Hindustan. The infant Saisunaga is said to have been born of a Vaisali princess, who had been carried away captive to the city of Raja-griha, and appointed to the post of chief courtesan. The babe was exposed outside the city, and preserved by a great snake or Nága; and then grew up and became Raja of Magadha. Another adventurer named Nanda joined some free-booters, and became Raja of Magadha. Lastly, Chandragupta is said to have been born of a Vaisali princess, and exposed in a cow-pen, where the infant was protected by a bull, and brought up by a cowherd, and ultimately became Raja of Magadha. To complicate the matter, similar details are introduced into the life of Krishna. This god, or hero, is said to have been brought up as the son of a cowherd named Nanda. Like Saisunaga, the infant Krishna was protected by the great Snake. See *ante*.

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[21] The mythical character of these two centuries is further proved by the story of Kasyapa, and his preservation of the relics of Gótama Buddha for a period of two centuries in a brazen vihára. Kasyapa prophesied that after two centuries a Raja would reign named Asoka, who would discover the relics. It is evident from the edicts that Asoka was not at all likely to venerate relics.—Bigandet.

[22] Maháwanso, ch. xx., page 122.

These details are practically devoid of all value. It does not really affect the history of India whether they are true or whether they are false. Indeed they might be cast aside as worthless, did they not prove, once and for all, that Buddhist and Brahmanical traditions, whether related in Sanskrit Puránas or Páli chronicles, are alike unauthentic and unreliable. The salient points in the Buddhist chronicles have now been tested by the impartial and contemporary authority of Greek writers, and by what appear to be contemporary inscriptions; and the result renders it impossible to doubt that the chronicles have been falsified by the unknown compilers beyond all hope of redemption. The Bráhmans have only completed what the Buddhists began, and it may be safely asserted that for all historical purposes the Sanskrit Puránas are more wild and extravagant than even the Páli chronicles. Thus Buddhists and Bráhmans have done their best to blot out the remains of the past for the sole and selfish purpose of aggrandizing themselves; and by so doing they have justly earned the reputation of being more unscrupulous in the perversion of the annals of their empire, than any other body of literati which have been represented in historical times.

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